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THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AND REUNION

PAPERS REPRINTED FROM THE 'CONTEMPORARY REVIEW'

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PREFATORY NOTE

I HAVE been encouraged to think that the papers which follow may be worth reprinting, partly as a brief record of progress in the movement towards Christian Reunion during the two not uneventful years which their composition happens to have covered, and partly perhaps for the sake of a few lessons and suggestions that have been gathered on the way. The gap that was interposed in the middle of the series was caused by the postponement of the publication of the first volume of *The Cambridge Mediaeval History*. This postponement, however, has brought more material under consideration; it has given time to show what parts of the movement are advancing and what are retreating; and it has given some opportunity to see which of the seeds sown are most likely to ripen. The papers as they were written reflected the feelings of the moment; but I have not thought that they would be less interesting for that reason, and I have ventured to leave them very much as they stood. It has occurred to me that stray copies may perhaps reach a more distant public than that which was originally contemplated; and as one knows that our episcopal titles are liable to change and are apt to be confusing to those to whom they are not familiar, I have substituted personal names which will be more easily remembered. I have also added in square

brackets a few new notes and cross-references. My best thanks are due to the editors of the *Contemporary Review* for their kind permission to reprint these articles.

These few words of preface had been dated 'Christmas, 1912', when the copy was sent to the Press. But at the last stage of re-printing, when the proofs were ready for final correction, progress was suddenly interrupted by the not very serious, but prolonged and disabling illness of the writer. In this way the spring season was missed, and publication has been unavoidably postponed until the autumn. In the meantime many important events have happened, especially the meeting of the two Scottish Assemblies in May, ratifying the work of the Committees and authorizing them to proceed, Mr. J. R. Mott's tour in the East, with the systematic series of Conferences that took place in connexion with it, and the quiet but steady preparations for the great American Conference, of which the date is still (wisely) left open. It would be tempting to comment further on these events; but the little book bears already too many marks of the different strata in its composition, and the temptation must be resisted. Suffice it to say, that the general movement of things is, the writer hopes and believes, wholesome and hopeful even beyond his more sanguine expectations.

W. S.

Christ Church, Oxford.
August, 1913.

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THE MOVEMENT TOWARDS REUNION

I

THE MOVEMENT TOWARDS REUNION

[April, 1911]

The times demand a solution, or at least some nearer approach to a solution, of the perennial problem of the Constitution of the Primitive Church and the Origins of the Christian Ministry. There is at this moment a conjunction of forces pressing home this demand such as has never existed before.

First from the side of scholarship. For some time past—in a more marked degree, we may say, for the last thirty years—the little company of scholars, 'sitting by their studious lamps,' has been working, intermittently but with some insistence, at this problem. Really the series begins further back still, with Bishop Lightfoot's famous dissertation on the 'Christian Ministry' in his commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians (published in 1868). But if I mention for this country, Hatch's Bampton Lectures, delivered in 1880, with the controversy which followed upon them, Gore's *The Church and the Ministry* (1888), Hort's *Christian Ecclesia* (1897), Moberly's *Ministerial Priesthood* (1897), Wordsworth's *Ministry of Grace* (1901), T. M. Lind-

say's *The Church and the Ministry* (1902), and Gore again, *Orders and Unity* (1909); and if I recall in Germany (to name only a few of the more important books) Harnack's *Analecta* to his translation of Hatch (1883), Loening, *Gemeindeverfassung* (1889), Sohm, *Kirchenrecht*, vol. i (1892), Harnack again, art. 'Verfassung (kirchliche)' in Hauck-Herzog, *Real-Encyklopädie* (1908), since reprinted and translated—it will be seen that the subject has been occupying the minds of leading theologians.[1] But all that has been in what may be called the normal course of scholarly activity. The discussions have been followed with interest by the outside public; but that interest has not had about it anything specially urgent and compelling.

Alongside of this work upon the theoretic problem —a branch of Christian archaeology—practical statesmen have had in view the practical side of the question of Reunion. Five successive Lambeth Conferences—High Councils, as they might be called, of the whole Anglican Communion—in 1867, 1878, 1888, 1897, and 1908, have had it before them; and in particular the Conference of 1888 pronounced upon it deliberately. It laid down the four broad conditions on which the question of reunion with other Christian bodies would be entertained. Many of us will remember the movement which went on in the years 1894–6 towards

[1] [Some of these works are referred to in more detail on pp. 51 ff. below.]

a better understanding between the English Church and the Church of Rome. It began with the active fraternization between some leading French clergy and prominent members of the Church of England. Negotiations were opened at Rome, and for a time seemed hopeful, but ended in disappointment. One is glad to recall these memories, because they showed the more chivalrous side of a section of the English Church which has sometimes appeared in a different character. We must take one thing with another, and must be content if we can understand what it may not be so easy to approve. The same year (1896) which saw the defeat of the Anglican advances towards Rome, saw the first fully constituted Congress of the Federation of the Free Churches at Nottingham. This is another prominent landmark. Reunion is sure to be accomplished piecemeal. First one group combines and then another; and combination will take place in different degrees. Federation is a step, and may be a large step, towards a closer union. The amalgamation of the Free Church and the United Presbyterians in Scotland (1900) was an example of such closer union; and the holding back of a portion of the former body was less important in itself than in the financial disturbance caused by the judgement in the House of Lords. In 1907 three of the Methodist bodies combined together under the shelter of an Act of Parliament. And I believe that at the present time some negotiations are going on between the

Established Church of Scotland and the United Free Church.[1]

All these have been more or less movements from above, though of course they could not have been carried out without the full consent of the community. The Pan-Anglican Congress was in like manner initiated from above; but the fact that it could not end, and was not intended to end, in any definite practical result, perhaps enhanced its effect in generating popular feeling. I am speaking of course of the Congress as distinct from the Conference of Bishops. The organization of this Congress was in its way a new thing. No assembly of the kind had ever (to the best of my belief) been prepared for so long beforehand or on so large a scale, and with such effective measures for reaching considerable masses of people. The example thus set was very soon followed, and in some respects bettered in the following, by the World's Missionary Conference held at Edinburgh in the summer of 1910. These two events together, the Pan-Anglican Congress and the Edinburgh Conference, from the vast numbers represented, from the wide public to which the interest of the meetings extended, as well as from the magnitude and thoroughness of the preparations, constitute (I must needs think) a new epoch in the history of Christian assemblies.

[1] [See below, pp. 118 ff., and also p. 6.] My attention has been drawn to a useful book, McCrie's *The Church of Scotland; her Divisions and Unions* (Macniven & Wallace, 1901). I am also

And then the Edinburgh Conference has this further significance, that it has not (so to speak) ended with itself; it has not been wound up and done with like most gatherings of the kind, even (in a certain sense) the Pan-Anglican Congress. But, in the first place, its history has been written by Mr. W. H. T. Gairdner, in his book called '*Edinburgh*, 1910' (Oliphant), in a way well calculated to spread and keep alive the interest. It is easy to be wise after the event, but one can see now that this is just what should have been done after the Pan-Anglican gathering. And beside this, it has also set in motion a train of events which seems likely to develop still further. My readers may not all be aware of the events to which I refer, as they have happened for the most part on the other side of the Atlantic. But I will give some account of them before I have done.

In the meantime I will take my start from the new period which seems to me to have been inaugurated in 1908. And I will consider the transactions of this period especially in their bearing upon the question of Christian Reunion. I will take the two great gatherings together, because they really hang together and bear testimony to the same state of things. There was only this difference of degree: in the Pan-Anglican Congress the question of Reunion was only one subject among many; and

informed that in Canada for some time back there has been only one body of Presbyterians and one body of Methodists.

nominally at Edinburgh it was only one subject among a number; but really at Edinburgh it dominated the whole assembly. I was not there myself, and cannot speak from experience; but I gather from all the accounts that have reached me that the interest in Reunion absorbed every other; it was in the background of men's thoughts all the time.

I

This is the first point that I have to bring out, the depth and strength of the desire for unity which ran all through the Conference. It is a saying attributed to Bishop Westcott, that reunion, when it comes, will come from the circumference rather than from the centre. And there is evidence on all hands that the desire for unity is strongest in the mission field and in the more thinly peopled districts of our Colonies and of America. It is only another example of a theoretic question being brought to the front and emphasized by practical needs. The nature of these needs will be illustrated shortly; but I must begin by speaking of the state of feeling in the field of Missions. The growth of the spirit of unity within this field is a very conspicuous phenomenon. It is clear that in recent years this spirit has advanced, it would be no exaggeration to say, by leaps and bounds. The Secretary of the

London Missionary Society, who had just been taking a long journey throughout the Empire of China and visiting not only the missions of his own Society but a very large number of the missions of other societies, reported to the Edinburgh Conference that in all the missionary communities with which he came in contact he found that this question of unity was one of the most burning and one of the most prominent, and also, from the point of view of those who were joined with him in that deputation, one of the most hopeful (*Report of Commission VIII*, p. 200). And the same kind of testimony came from many other quarters.

The missionaries who flocked to Edinburgh came with their minds full of this spirit. And the contagious effect of meeting and comparing notes with others like themselves fanned it into flame. Even one who does but read the accounts at a distance cannot but see that the whole Conference soon caught the glow. It was a unique experience in the lives of those who took part in it.

What might be called the moral effect of the Conference was summed up in felicitous language by Sir Andrew Fraser, Chairman of the Commission that was specially charged with the subject of Co-operation and Unity:

> We in our Commission and you in this Conference have surely had before you the vision of unity, a vision fair and beautiful, far better and far higher than anything we have dreamt of before.

We have had that vision before us, a vision of that which is perhaps afar off, and which is certainly indistinct in its outline, but which has laid hold of our hearts, and we will never get rid of it. . . . Even now it seems that the Spirit of God is preparing men in all sections of the Church for the answer to that prayer [the prayer of St. John xvii]. We will await that answer patiently. It may be that it will be long delayed, but meanwhile we will keep this ideal before our minds constantly and never forget it. We will endeavour in all our fellowship with our brethren of all sections of the Church to be animated by brotherly love and forbearance and never to be intolerant and arrogant; we will endeavour in every respect gradually to seize every opportunity of conference and co-operation, that we may be brought in our work closer to one another, and so closer to our Lord.—*Report of Comm. VIII*, p. 190 f.

Nothing could be more admirable than the spirit of mutual consideration shown on this Commission. There was evidently the fullest desire to respect the scruples of those who were hampered by reserves in regard to it. Great as the Conference was, and vast as were the numbers represented by it outside (estimated at 150,000,000), it should be remembered that it still did not include the whole of Christendom, but only the smaller Protestant half of it. The Anglican Communion (including some 20,000,000) should perhaps be considered apart as accepting that designation only with qualifications.

Of its own natural impulse the Conference leaned towards unity, and the visible feeling for unity was

manifest all through its deliberations. But even if it had not been so minded of itself, the presence of members of the native Churches would have impelled it in that direction. One notable and very encouraging feature in the Reports of the Conference was the excellence of the contributions made by these native speakers. They certainly seemed to have mastered the art of seven minutes' speeches better than many Europeans. Here is a specimen. Mr. Cheng Ching-Yi (the name is differently spelt), of the London Missionary Society, said:

I count as one of the most gracious blessings that God has bestowed upon the Church in China in recent years the spirit of unity. Something has already been done in the way of Christian federation, and the result is at once practical and remarkable. It is a great blessing for the Church in China to-day, and it will be a much greater blessing for the Church in the days to come. As a representative of the Chinese Church, I speak entirely from the Chinese standpoint. We may, and we may not, all agree, but I feel it my duty to present before you the mind of the Chinese Church as frankly as possible. The Christian federation movement occupies a chief place in the hearts of our leading Christian men in China, and they welcome every effort that is made towards that end. This is notably in the provinces of Szechwan, Honan, Shantung, and Chihli. In educational work, evangelistic work, and so on, the Churches joined hand in hand, and the result of this is most encouraging. Since the Chinese Christians have enjoyed the sweetness of such a unity, they long for more, and look for yet greater things. They are watching with keen eyes, and listening

with attentive ears, what this Conference will show and say to them concerning this all-important question. I am sure they will not be disappointed. Speaking plainly, we hope to see, in the near future, a united Christian Church without any denominational distinctions. . . . Such a union is needed for these reasons: (*a*) Things that really help the growing movement of the self-support and self-government of the Church in China are welcomed. A united effort both spiritual and physical is absolutely necessary. (*b*) Speaking generally, denominationalism has never interested the Chinese mind. He finds no delight in it, but sometimes he suffers from it. (*c*) Owing to the powerful force of heathenism from without, and the feebleness of the Church from within, the Christians are compelled to unite in building up a defence of the Church.

From the Chinese standpoint there is nothing impossible about such a union. Such difficulties as may be experienced will be due to our Western friends and not ourselves. . . . In China, and for the Chinese, such a union is certainly desirable. China, with all her imperfections, is a country that loves unity both in national and family life.—*Report of Comm. VIII*, p. 195 f.

It would seem to be the same speaker, who, in another debate, after again urging that 'the problem in China is the independence of the Chinese Church', adds the important qualification, 'really there is no independence of the Church. All Churches of Christ are dependent first upon God and then upon each other' (*Comm. II*, p. 352). It is interesting to note that the native Chinese leaders are themselves conscious of this. To have reached that point

is to have travelled far on the road of Christian experience and knowledge. And the foreign (Nonconformist) missionaries are also conscious of it. For instance, the Rev. W. Nelson Bitton (of the London Missionary Society), on the one hand, tells us explicitly that:

> Wherever Chinese young men are gathered together and are talking concerning the things which make for their national progress, you will find them keenly interested in this question of the growth and independence of the Chinese Church. They have frankly stated their ideal to be a united Chinese Christian Church, and it is idle for us to ignore, and it would be foolish for us to oppose, that national sentiment within the Christian Church, because it is our duty as Christians to stand in line with it.

But, on the other hand, he too goes on to add:

> We do not want to see rising in China, or in a far Eastern land, a far Eastern Church separated in sympathy and in aim from the Catholic Church of the Christian world. The danger which I have spoken of is not one that is in the air or is remote; it is near, and it is pressing for immediate attention (*op. cit.*, p. 351).

Compare with this the very important warning delivered on the same occasion by Bishop Gore (p. 355). I shall have to refer to this again later, as it goes to the root of the main question before us.

It is a tribute to the solidity of character of the Chinese that they are to the front in this matter of

the organizing of a united native Christian Church. At the large and representative Centenary Missionary Conference at Shanghai, in 1907, it was unanimously resolved that 'in planting the Church of Christ on Chinese soil, we desire only to plant one Church under the sole control of the Lord Jesus Christ, governed by the Word of the living God, and led by His guiding Spirit'. Next to China comes Japan ; and here one is glad to think that the Anglican Communion as a whole (American as well as British) is already represented by a united native Church with a native name (Nippon Sei Kokwai, 'Holy Catholic Church of Japan'), which appears to have been in existence since the year 1887 (*Comm. VIII*, p. 97 ; cf. *II*, p. 289). The Presbyterians have also a complete organization, not only in China and Japan but in India, where other partial attempts towards union have been made, and where the national feeling is rapidly gaining strength.

Federations on a larger or smaller scale in connexion with Mission work are fast springing up all over the world. The largest of all seems to be the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, which held its first meeting in the city of Philadelphia in December 1908, and includes within its membership thirty-three Christian denominations with a communicant membership of 17,000,000, representing fully 50,000,000 of the population (*Comm. VIII*, p. 210). I gather that a similar organization exists in Canada. In any case the federa-

tive spirit receives great support in the United States and in the Colonies. In more than one direction the vigour and energy of our American and Colonial kindred seems inclined to sweep all obstacles before it. A Canadian delegate, the Rev. W. T. Stackhouse, D.D., a Baptist from Western Canada, who caused some amusement by describing himself as 'the longest man in the Convention', spoke in a breezy way of what he called real Christian union:

> The Christian laymen of Canada and the United States are doing more to bring together the different religious bodies than can be done by all the ecclesiastical Conferences that could be held during the next hundred years. We are not simply talking about union, we are actually doing the work in our united relationship. I have been in the campaign extending from the Pacific to the Atlantic, covering something like one hundred places. Here we have the various laymen representing the various denominations and the various Board Secretaries in co-operation, and when these men speak from the public platform you cannot tell one from the other (*op. cit.*, p. 227).

Mr. Gairdner tells us of one 'well-known delegate from America' who was prepared to go beyond this and 'thought that all the differences that divide the denominations were so unutterably unimportant that they might be made up into a mere appendix to some handbook of common Christian teaching; and then [added]: "I suggest we follow the example of modern science—cut out the appendix"' ('*Edin-*

burgh, 1910,' p. 207). I have not been able to identify this speaker in the *Report*; and it would not be fair to take him as typical of more than the *tendency* that exists among his countrymen. I cannot help rather wondering what sort of figure this delegate and his Canadian brother just quoted would make if they were to undergo an examination in Church history, or what they would say if they were to extend their experiences from the New World to the Old and to different circles in the Old. They would there come in contact with types of Christianity far removed from their own, where it would be only too easy to tell one from the other.

At the same time I am well aware that there is a real and very natural foundation for the zeal of men so situated in throwing off what they conceive to be superfluous trappings. One of the best illustrations of this was in a paper read at the Pan-Anglican Congress by the Rev. H. J. Rose, of the diocese of Sydney, Australia. Speaking of the problem of Reunion, he said :

> In this great continent of Australia, with its sparse population and its vast areas of settlement, the question is really crucial. I don't think this is recognized either within or without the Church. One goes to a little bush township, and this is the religious equipment of the place: 'A Church of England' (as the building is ludicrously called), a Roman Catholic, a Wesleyan, and perhaps a Presbyterian or Congregational, place of worship. Understand, there is no kind of endowment, though each

of these 'causes' probably receives a small and precarious grant from a central fund. Otherwise each shepherd of souls has to pick up what he can. Needless to say, there is competition—not for spiritual influence only, but for bare sustenance. The unhappy pastor's independence is compromised, his spiritual and intellectual power is lowered by what is practically a struggle for existence. The same thing obtains everywhere, though, of course, it is not so strongly marked. In my own parish, a comparatively well-to-do and not thickly populated suburb nine miles from Sydney, we have two Congregational chapels, two Methodist chapels, and one belonging to the Roman Catholics. Think of the waste of energy, the inevitable pulling one against the other, the almost inevitable bitterness which these unhappy divisions engender.—*Pan-Anglican Congress Report*, S. F. II. (e).

A touch of autobiography gives further point to this vivid description, and shows why the conditions were felt to be so galling. The writer had acted as chaplain in the Boer War:

During practically the whole of the year 1900 I was a chaplain in South Africa; part of the time at Orange River, later with Sir C. Warren in Griqualand West, later still with Sir John French. Some of my best friends during this period were the Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, and Wesleyan chaplains. For four months we worked together in perfect harmony in a great enteric hospital; occasionally it fell to my lot, in the absence of the Roman priest, to minister to the sick and dying of his Communion; and when I was compelled to be away from the hospital or columns, my friend gladly took my place. There was no thought of

proselytizing. The De Profundis, the Kyrie Eleison, the Lord's Prayer, were our common privilege, and our common refuge was the Cross. It was the same on the field. My friends were ready at all times to help me in my work. Our strength for our special service, our influence with officers and men, were doubled by the sense of unity. So was it with my brethren among the Wesleyans and Presbyterians. It happened that during most of my time I was the only commissioned chaplain at the hospital or in the division to which I was attached. Under these circumstances I was able to be of some help to the scripture-readers and other lay helpers, and my help was warmly appreciated, and in various ways overflowingly reciprocated.

Necessity has no law; and it is a happy thing that it should sometimes override our most legitimate divisions.

The same writer touches the tender spot a little later:

Is it too much to ask that, in certain cases at least, a Dissenting minister should be asked to abandon his Communion rite and be recognized as a Christian prophet, with authority to preach, under certain conditions, in our churches? I am still speaking from a Colonial point of view. You can't have reunion and, at the same time, rival altars, but it does seem to me that if, in a given place, all Christians could agree to join in the Supreme Act of Worship, other difficulties might wait for solution.

That is a very serious question to which I shall come back presently. But in the meantime the state of things of which I have been speaking will explain the forward action described at Edinburgh

by the Bishop of Gippsland (Dr. A. W. Prior), which reaches the high-water mark so far as the relation of the Church of England to other communions is concerned. The Bishop's communication is summarized thus :

Some seven years ago the Presbyterian Church of Australia addressed a letter—an historic letter—to the Anglican Union of Australia and to other Churches there, asking that an effort might be made, by means of conference, in order to secure closer union.[1] That letter is memorable from the fact that, so far as I know, it is the very first instance of an approach to the Church of England from any of the bodies outside of it. It was read sympathetically. In due course these two Churches, by their representatives, met. In the years 1906 and 1907, sessions of the Conference were held. . . . Upon the first three points, the Holy Scriptures, the Apostles' Creed, and the Nicene Creed and the two Sacraments, there was absolute unanimity in the whole of that Conference, and when the difficult question of Episcopacy came up, I am at least at liberty to say that it was dealt with in a manner which, to my mind, shadows forth, not only a possible way of securing organic unity between these two Churches, but the only possible way that can be conceived. I am at liberty to say this also, that when these conclusions were placed before the Lambeth Conference two years ago, that Conference did not go quite so far as our very warm-hearted Conference did, but, nevertheless, it received what was reported very sympathetically. We are

[1] I understand that similar advances have been made in Canada, but that the Anglican Bishops did not think the time ripe for direct negotiation.

cautioned to make haste slowly, with great emphasis on the slowly, but my impression is that if the Church of England in Australia were able to act independently—she has not, and does not want to do so—our organic union might be secured in a very short period, and I might add, without any sacrifice of any kind of principle on either side.—*Comm. VIII*, p. 228 f.[1]

It is doubtless a good thing that these negotiations should have been held, and we can understand the slight undertone of impatience which the Bishop evidently feels at their not receiving more complete recognition. Within the narrower horizon of his own diocese and the neighbouring Australian dioceses such a state of mind is only natural. But I am afraid that one who takes a wider view can only endorse the caution of the Lambeth Conference 'to make haste slowly, with great emphasis on the slowly'. I believe that this is the best advice that can be given to the whole Anglican Communion throughout the world.

At the Pan-Anglican Congress a warning note was struck by Canon Stephen of Melbourne. Speaking of the Church in Australia, he said :

There is a danger connected with our ecclesiastical legislation which, at no very distant date, may become serious. Our synods are composed of both clergy and laity. The standard of theological education is not always very high. The feeling of freshness and independence connected with a new country

[1] The Bishop spoke to very similar effect at the Church Congress at Cambridge [1910].

causes an imperfect sympathy with tradition. Reverence for antiquity and appreciation of the importance of historic continuity are not marked features in the majority of our members, and as the number of those trained in an English atmosphere naturally decreases, there is a tendency to pay too little attention to the teachings of the past. It is possible then that, in a diocesan synod, a resolution or act may be passed which is in conflict with the doctrine or practice of the Catholic Church.—*Pan-Anglican Papers*, S. F. III. (h).

I believe that these words are true for the whole of the New World, as compared with the Old—for the United States as well as for the Colonies. Of course both in the States and in the Colonies there are centres where the study of history is seriously pursued and carried to a high degree of perfection. But the historic sense is not so widely diffused as to have got a real hold upon public opinion; and it is apt to be lost sight of altogether in the impulse to vigorous action which is so characteristic and so easily roused in the younger nations. I would be far from suggesting that either the Bishop of Gippsland or those who have acted with him ignored history. But I do believe that history is in danger of being ignored by the public to which he more immediately appealed; and I am sure that, where history is ignored, in the long run it will have its revenge. After all, there are no short cuts in matters of the greatest moment. Problems must be worked out, and worked out from the very beginning.

The whole antithesis to the demand for what I must call hasty solutions was summed up in a momentous pronouncement by Bishop Gore at the last Church Congress at Cambridge:

> The proposition I would make is this—that the Anglican Communion would certainly be rent in twain on the day on which any non-episcopally ordained minister was formally allowed within our Communion to celebrate the Eucharist; and any Colonial Church of our Communion which recognized in this way the validity of non-episcopal orders, would either be disowned by other parts of the Anglican Communion, or, if that were not the case, would cause what I have just described as the division within our Communion at home.—*Report of the Ch. Congress*, p. 115.

II

I cannot pretend to minimize the shock with which this pronouncement, when I saw it in print, came to me as it must have done to many others, and still more to those who heard it. I shall have, before this course of papers is finished, to speak at some length of the central expression on which the whole turns. But at the same time I should wish to recognize heartily the courage and resolute facing of facts which prompted the utterance, and to endorse the Bishop's belief that as a statement of fact what he said is strictly and literally true.

There is what it is really not too much to call the tragedy of the situation. There is an immense desire for reunion the whole world over; and yet as matters stand it must be felt to be impossible. For I must needs admit that the Bishop's trenchant words describe the deliberate attitude of the Anglican Communion, especially at the home base in England and—perhaps not quite so sharply, but yet substantially—in America. The Historic Episcopate is a recognized 'plank' in the programme of the whole Communion, so far as that programme has any public authorization. And all over the mission-field, the presence of this 'plank' has had a restricting and limiting effect upon the relation of the Anglican to other communities. As we read through the Edinburgh Reports, we constantly come across the evidences of this:

The Societies at work are united in the Evangelical Union of the Philippine Islands, and have divided the entire field among themselves. The plan has worked so successfully that the Islands have become dotted with churches which scarcely know there is more than one Protestant Church. The American Protestant Episcopal Church has not formally joined the Union, but it has respected the principles of comity and the division of territory.—*Comm. VIII*, p. 14.

The Provincial Synod of Bishops in India is unable to accept the views regarding territorial delimitation adopted by the Madras Conference (p. 17).

The Anglican Church has not seen its way to accept the Arbitration Board, but apparently all the

Missions at work in South Africa (except the Roman Catholics) have given their support to the arrangements adopted by the Conference (p. 25).

In Japan the Missions are united in 'The Standing Committee of Co-operating Christian Missions in Japan', on which practically all the Societies at work in the country, except the Protestant Episcopal Church in America and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, are represented (p. 35).

In Southern Central Africa there have already been two meetings of the Nyasaland United Missionary Conference. . . . It is representative of all the Missions at work in Nyasaland, except the Roman Catholic Societies and the Universities Mission (p. 36). And so on *ad libitum*.

I confess that every statement of this kind that I come to jars upon me. At the same time I bow to the inevitable. I cannot blame the societies or communities concerned, because they are simply carrying out what may be presumed to be their orders, the deliberate policy of the Church to which they belong. And at the present moment I do not see how that policy could be otherwise. A great Church must act as a whole; it cannot have its individual members flying off at all sorts of odd tangents. But, while it so acts, the only temper befitting it is one of austere gravity, self-reproach, and contrition. The Archbishop of York at Cambridge spoke scathingly of certain members of our Communion who, with the kindliest intentions, behaved towards Nonconformists 'as if they were merely Christians in misfortune!' A hair-shirt would

rather be the right attire for them. Do they remember that it is by the narrowest of narrow shaves, by the smallest of special providences, which hardly involved any peculiar virtue in any one, that they come to be in possession of that continuous succession which other bodies lack? Dr. Briggs, in his recent book on *Church Unity*, p. 91, says bluntly:

> The accident or good providence that enabled the Church of England to advance into the Reformation with her Bishops at her head, does not entitle that Church to lord it over other National Churches, or to claim the only valid ministry in Protestantism.

And, whether that expresses the whole truth or not, it is at least a wholesome reminder of what our outward (and inward) behaviour ought to be.

And yet, with all this humiliating consciousness upon me, I cannot undertake to say, even as the most private of private opinions, that the Church of my allegiance under present conditions is fundamentally wrong. There is a difference between episcopal and non-episcopal Churches: there is even a shade of difference between Churches which can point to an unbroken episcopate and those which cannot. And round that one major difference a number of minor differences revolve. These differences constitute a real barrier that is not to be removed by any short and easy process. We must steadily aim at removing this barrier, but in the careful, deliberate, and light-handed way in which

(as Lord William Gascoyne Cecil reminded his Edinburgh audience) the wary bee-keeper gets at his honey. Hasty and violent methods will simply mean ruin.

There are special reasons why the Church of England just at this moment is obliged to be more than usually careful. The political, or semi-religious and semi-political, controversies of recent years have made opinion in the Church very sensitive. It has conceived a perfect horror of everything that can be labelled Undenominational. I believe myself that this horror is exaggerated, that it blinds people's minds to much that is of real value. But in principle the instinct is a right one; the sacrifice of that which is distinctive is often just the sacrifice of that which is in a sense most valuable, of the special contribution that the Church or society has to make to the fullness of the stature of the Body of Christ.

Suppose, writes the Bishop of Bombay (Dr. E. J. Palmer), that the points on which we differ are matters on which we ought to insist, are vital to us, contribute to our spiritual life, are (as we believe) capable of vitalizing others. Then how dare we call them unimportant? How dare we be content with a reunion which neglects them? On this theory of differences, the Greatest Common Factor basis of reunion becomes untenable.—*Comm. VIII*, p. 114.

And Bishop Talbot was not less insistent upon the necessity of aiming at richness and complete-

ness rather than at the delusive simplicity which comes of shallowness and forgetfulness:

> Unity is, in fact, almost a synonym for the life of the body of Christ. It is living, and not abstract; and has the fullness which belongs to life. True unity then would express itself mentally in unity of conviction; morally, in unity of heart or feeling, and of conduct or purpose; and, structurally, in unity of order; unities all of them containing within them room for rich varieties of intellectual method, of moral temperament, and of detailed plan. It is an utterly defective view of unity, which narrows it to any one of these. We stand for the vital idea of unity as the one nearest to the truth and fullest in content (*op. cit.*, p. 232).

And another consideration of great importance weighed with the leaders of the Anglican Communion. They felt it their duty to keep open the door for the entrance into the completed Unity of the great Churches of the East and of the West. Speaking of the first of these, Lord William Gascoyne Cecil said:

> The great orthodox Church which reaches right across Russia is one of the greatest powers of Christianity in the future which has hardly wakened up yet. Anybody who has studied the great Russian country will bear me out in saying that that is one of the great powers of the future, and you cannot take any strong action until that Church is represented (p. 210).

And in like manner Bishop Talbot laid down that:

If, indeed, 'only one Church of Christ' is to be founded in new countries, the unity must comprehend the great communion of Rome as well as the great Church of the East (p. 233).

However distant any such consummation must seem under present conditions, the amiable and truly Christian language quoted from Archbishop Nicolai of Japan, Bishop Bonomelli of Cremona, and an unnamed Professor referred to by Mrs. Romanes (pp. 4, 220–3, 225) is evidence enough that there are forces at work that may bear fuller fruit in the future. And any one who is familiar with the learned literature of either the Greek Church or the Latin will be able to confirm this impression.

The point at which the problem becomes most urgent is, no doubt, in relation to the young native Churches. It was this that Bishop Gore evidently had in his mind when he so earnestly entreated those Churches to think out fully their conception of the Church before they tried to put it into practice. And this is a matter in which the foreign missionaries must help them.

If we, as foreign missionaries, are to hand over Christianity to the Church of China, and Japan, and India with a good courage, then we must have done more than at the present moment we seem, I think, inclined to do, to contribute to a definition of what the Church is, the definition of its essentials or real Catholic features. . . . I am quite certain that no system, no religion, no body can hope to stand unless it undergoes the painful intellectual

effort of defining what its principles are. To run away from that obligation is to run away from something which is essential for continuous corporate life.—*Comm. II*, p. 355.

III

The pace at which events move, especially in the Western Hemisphere, is formidable. Only within the last few days (January, 1911) there has reached me from the other side of the Atlantic a summary account of a 'Joint Commission appointed to arrange for a World Conference on Faith and Order.' All that has happened is since the date of the Edinburgh Conference. The initiative has come from the Episcopal Church in the United States. I believe that, if we were to go behind the scenes, it would be found that the first suggestion came from a single enthusiastic and influential missionary bishop in that communion. It fell on prepared ground, and was eagerly and actively taken up. The General Convention of the Episcopal Church held its triennial meeting at Cincinnati in the month of October, 1910. In accordance with a resolution of the House of Deputies, a Joint Committee was appointed to consider a proposal laid before them, and this Committee reported as follows:

Your Committee is of one mind. We believe that the time has now arrived when representatives

of the whole family of Christ, led by the Holy Spirit, may be willing to come together for the consideration of questions of Faith and Order. We believe, further, that all Christian Communions are in accord with us in our desire to lay aside self-will, and to put on the mind which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. We would heed this call of the Spirit of God in all lowliness, and with singleness of purpose. We would place ourselves by the side of our fellow-Christians, looking not only on our own things, but also on the things of others, convinced that our one hope of mutual understanding is in taking personal counsel together in the spirit of love and forbearance. It is our conviction that such a Conference for the purpose of study and discussion, without power to legislate or to adopt resolutions, is the next step toward unity.

With grief for our aloofness in the past, and for the other faults of pride and self-sufficiency, which make for schism; with loyalty to the truth as we see it, and with respect for the convictions of those who differ from us; holding the belief that the beginnings of unity are to be found in the clear statement and full consideration of those things in which we differ, as well as of those things in which we are at one, we respectfully submit the following resolution:

WHEREAS, there is to-day among all Christian people a growing desire for the fulfilment of our Lord's prayer that all His disciples may be one; that the world may believe that God has sent Him: *Resolved*, The House of Bishops concurring, That a Joint Commission be appointed to bring about a Conference for the consideration of questions touching Faith and Order, and that all Christian Communions throughout the world which confess our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour be asked to unite with

us in arranging for and conducting such a Conference. The Commission shall consist of seven Bishops, appointed by the Chairman of the House of Bishops, and seven Presbyters and seven Laymen, appointed by the President of the House of Deputies, and shall have power to add to its number and to fill any vacancies occurring before the next General Convention.

On October 19 this resolution was adopted unanimously by both the House of Bishops and the House of Clerical and Lay Deputies, and the members of the Commission were nominated—seven Bishops, seven Presbyters, and seven Laymen. The list of Bishops includes Dr. C. H. Brent of the Philippine Islands and Dr. D. H. Greer of New York.

While the General Convention of the Episcopal Church was sitting at Cincinnati, the National Council of the Congregational Churches was holding its convention at Boston. At this meeting a vote was passed 'That in view of the possibility of fraternal discussion of Church Unity suggested by the Lambeth Conference of Anglican Bishops in 1908, a special commission of five representatives be appointed to consider any overtures that may come to our denomination as a result of this Conference.' This vote was duly communicated to the Cincinnati Convention; and the five members of the Commission were named, headed by Dr. Newman Smyth of New Haven.

It is important to give the draft of the Report of

this Congregational Commission, because it takes up the last Lambeth Conference and is practically addressed to the Bishops of the Anglican Communion. The draft report is as follows:

WHEREAS, the last Lambeth Conference of the Bishops of the Anglican Communion, which was held in London in 1908, lifted up the ideal of Church unity in these words: 'We must set before us the Church of Christ as He would have it, one spirit and one body, enriched with all those elements of divine truth which the separated communities of Christians now emphasize separately, strengthened by the interaction of all the gifts and graces which our divisions now hold asunder, filled with all the fullness of God. We dare not, in the name of peace, barter away those precious things of which we have been made stewards. Neither can we wish others to be unfaithful to trusts which they hold no less sacred. We must fix our eyes on the Church of the future, which is to be adorned with all the precious things, both theirs and ours. We must constantly desire not compromise, but comprehension, not uniformity, but unity.'

AND WHEREAS, the Anglican Bishops further recommend that for this end conferences of ministers and laymen of different Christian bodies be held to promote a better mutual understanding; and we, on our part, would seek, as much as lieth in us, for the unity and peace of the whole household of faith; and, forgetting not that our forefathers, whose orderly ministry is our inheritance, were not willingly separatists, we would loyally contribute the precious things, of which as Congregationalists we are stewards, to the Church of the future; therefore this Council would put on record its appreciation of the spirit

and its concurrence in the purpose of this expression of the Lambeth Conference; and voice its earnest hope for closer fellowship with the Episcopal Church in Christian work and worship.

Both of these seem to me, I confess, to be singularly Christian documents. A notable feature about them is their manliness—the simplicity and directness with which they are expressed, and the genuine feeling that lies behind them. It is always a fine spectacle when a strong man meets his brother with outstretched hand, and with the frank acknowledgement that he has been in the wrong. It seems to me that this character is impressed on all the movement that has taken its impulse from Edinburgh, but especially on this American branch of it.

As yet the only two bodies publicly involved are the Episcopalian and the Congregational. But the feeling in America (in Canada as well as the United States) is evidently so strong that the other leading bodies may be expected soon to come in.

The subject ('Faith and Order') proposed for the 'World Conference' becomes a little less staggering when it is taken as interpreted by the so-called 'Lambeth Quadrilateral' of 1888. It will be remembered that the four heads were:

'1. The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, as the Revealed Word of God.

'2. The Nicene Creed, as the sufficient statement of the Christian Faith.

'3. The two Sacraments—Baptism and the Supper

of the Lord—ministered with unfailing use of Christ's words of institution, and the elements ordained by Him.

'4. The Historic Episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the Unity of His Church.'

I understand that it is not proposed that the Conference should 'expatiate free' over the whole field of Christian doctrine, but only that the Conference should consider how far the different bodies represented can agree to unite on the four points specified. Still I would venture to urge that the earliest date contemplated should be the year 1915.[1] This would be in convenient time for the next Lambeth Conference; and I do not in the least believe that the materials involved could be got into shape before. For the process of preparation, if it is to be at all thorough, cannot be a short one.

The most vulnerable point in the proposal as it stands—unless, indeed, we are to read a good deal between the lines—is the method of discussion. We hear only of a 'World Conference', and of 'taking personal counsel'. But wholesale methods of this kind can only bring to a head what has been threshed out beforehand. A World Conference cannot verify references or work out problems of close detail. The real preparation must be by means of books,

[1] [I am glad that we need not think even of this: see p. 116.]

or by Reports on the scale of books. My own belief is that the most important steps will have to be independent of the great Conference altogether.[1]

IV

Indeed, it seems to me that the right mode of proceeding has been already indicated by a statesmanlike son of my own University of Oxford. Dr. E. J. Palmer, at present Bishop of Bombay, before taking up that office, had acted for some years as Chaplain and Fellow of Balliol College. He had played a yeoman's part in organizing the Pan-Anglican Congress. His experience in connexion with this (I do not know how long the idea had been present to his mind before) had turned his attention strongly to the question of Reunion. He went out to India with this much in his mind; and soon after his arrival (on May 13, 1909) he read a paper to a Missionary Conference held at Mahableshwar. In this paper, with his accustomed terseness and force, he went straight to the point of what I too believe to be the central issue in the whole matter.

I am going to concern myself to-night with ideals. I am not going to take up the question of the next steps towards reunion. There is a more important thing in life than next steps. It is the governing

[1] [On the Conference on Faith and Order, see pp. 116, 136 f.]

idea. . . . One of the commonest forms of a governing idea is what we know as the ideal. If there is a great change coming in the action of a generation, it will be preceded by a change in ideals. I say that we have for some centuries held ideals of Church polity which steered us away from reunion. If this generation is going towards reunion, there must be a change in ideals somewhere.—*Reunion in Western India*, Bombay, 1910, p. 4.

This paragraph—or so much of it as I have quoted—really deserves to be written in letters of gold. It seems to me to give the key at once to the mistakes that have been made in the past and to the best hope that we have for the future. Hitherto we have had far too much about 'next steps', and too little about 'the governing idea'. What we are called upon to do now is to concentrate our attention closely upon this. And that must be done, not for the time at least in general public debate, but by students and scholars working in their studies and among their books. This is the first indispensable stage; in it there are no short cuts; and the process must not be hurried.

And yet I am not sure that even the Bishop of Bombay himself is not a little by way of confusing the two things. I am not sure that, even for him, the governing idea does not almost become a next step, so eager is he to embrace it.

When the Bishop went down from Oxford to take up the work of his diocese, he made an impressive appeal to the Universities—not quite directly, but

in a sermon preached to a special audience of Undergraduates.

The point which at the present time is of the greatest difficulty in regard to the reunion of the bodies which form the vastly greater and most national part of our British Christianity is Episcopacy. Now it is impossible to reach any agreement on this point while the present divergence of historical opinion as to the origin of Episcopacy and of Holy Orders in general exists. . . . It lies with men who can be content to retract their own past asseverations, if they turn out untenable, who are willing to approach the question in the spirit of scientific history, who can die to themselves, their opinions, and, if they are unhappy enough to belong to one, their party, and give themselves up to the truth—it lies with such men, I say, to provide a basis for reunion, by studying over again the whole question of the origin of Episcopacy, with its bearings on the validity of Ministry and Sacraments, and by presenting to the Church a dispassionate, scientific, scholarly statement on the whole subject. If such men can be found anywhere, it should be in the Universities. I call upon the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge to set themselves to the task, and to complete it in four or five years, that the book may be in the hands of all those throughout the world who are longing for union, and that it may be well discussed and digested before the next Lambeth Conference.—*Parting Words*, Oxford, and London, 1909, pp. 14–16.

There follows a broadly sketched scheme for a work in three parts, which the Bishop rightly believes 'would take an important place in the foundation of the great edifice of reunion'.

The Bishop knows enough of learned work to be aware that 'four or five years' is a sanguine estimate of the time that a work planned on such a scale would involve. But he appears to have jumped to the conclusion that his whole appeal had fallen upon deaf ears. He referred to it in his recent reprint of papers connected with *Reunion in Western India*. He says (p. 68):

> At the end of 1908 I had the temerity to appeal to the Divinity Professors of Oxford and Cambridge to provide our Church before the next Lambeth Conference with a scientific reconsideration of the questions of the origin, history, and validity of Holy Orders, and of the validity of Sacraments. The Professors, as far as I know, for different reasons, declined the task.

How does the Bishop know this, and what did he expect? Did he expect to receive replies from all the Professors by return of post, saying that they would at once put aside all their other tasks and meet in conclave to apportion the work among themselves? I need hardly say that this is not quite what really happened.

Let me take my own case, which perhaps is fairly typical. The Sermon, as I have explained, was not addressed to the Professors. It was not printed until some little time after its delivery. The printed copies are dated 1909, and it was some way on in that year before I became possessed of one. It did make a serious impression upon me; but I was

busy with other things; I had not touched the subject of the Ministry for something like ten years; and, much as I felt the force of the appeal, it could only for the time lie dormant in a corner of my mind. It is really the Edinburgh Conference that has called it up again. And again, as I have said, I was not present in person; it is only echoes of it that have reached me. The official Reports have only been in my hands a very short time. A kindly invitation from the Editor of the *Contemporary Review* came to me at an opportune moment; and I am impelled to take up my pen and try to do what I can.

For I really believe that something can be done. I really believe that historical science has a word to say—not that Professors, the world over, are deliberately taking up the subject of the Episcopate, with a view to supplying a basis for Reunion, but that in the regular course of disinterested historical inquiry a point has been reached at which there seem to me to be hopeful openings and hopeful auguries.

That is how matters stand; and I must try, in the two papers that are to follow, to explain what has led me to this opinion. I am afraid that what I have to offer will be some way from satisfying my good friend the Bishop; but my readers will perhaps accept it for what it is.

THE PRIMITIVE MODEL

II

THE PRIMITIVE MODEL

[May, 1911]

We owe especially to Dr. Moberly the warning that in any discussion as to the origins of the Christian ministry (as, indeed, on any subject of importance) it is necessary to be quite clear as to the presuppositions under which the argument is conducted. I think it may be said that, since that warning was given, it has been generally borne in mind by those who have taken part in the discussion. They have, at least, let it be seen quite frankly what is the point of view from which they themselves have approached the subject.

Dr. Moberly's *Ministerial Priesthood* was published in 1897; and the same year, but a little earlier in the year, saw the posthumous appearance of Dr. Hort's lectures on *The Christian Ecclesia*. The interval was sufficient to allow of the introduction into the later work of a considerable Note dealing with the earlier (*Min. Pr.*, pp. 22–9). The lectures had been delivered as far back as 1888–9. And it is true that the methods and habits of mind that found expression in the two books are so different that what has just been said might seem not to hold good of Dr. Hort's

volume. The warning as to presuppositions was uttered, in the first instance, with reference to Bishop Lightfoot's famous dissertation in his *Commentary on Philippians* (1868); and in this connexion it has been generally admitted to be in place. Bishop Lightfoot was primarily a scholar, and his simple piety was not perplexed by subtleties of philosophical thinking. In this his Cambridge colleague differed from him; but they had in common the habit of approaching questions raised in the field of theology largely from the side of exegesis. Dr. Hort never shrank from the examination either of assumptions or of consequences, though he did not always lay the results of his examination upon the table, neither did he always succeed in making his deeper meaning clear to his readers. But, while he approached his subject (as I have said) mainly from the side of exegesis, and that the exegesis of detached passages taken one by one, he was exceedingly cautious as to the drawing of general inferences, and especially cautious as to reading into a passage more than it contained; he would not have been so much on his guard against inferring from it less than he might have done. Dr. Moberly's whole type of mind and processes of reasoning were so fundamentally different that we can hardly be surprised at their not getting properly into touch with each other. And the same kind of explanation accounts even more completely for the criticisms on Dr. Hort in the later editions of Bishop Gore's *The Church and the Ministry* (I quote from

ed. 4, 1900); in this case the differences of method and mental habit are very great indeed.

The difference between Dr. Hort and Bishop Gore is the difference between a mind essentially critical and a mind essentially dogmatic. In like manner Dr. Hatch, in reviewing Liddon's famous sermon at the consecration of Bishop King (*Contemporary Review*, June, 1885), found in it no less than 'six assumptions', which seemed to him to be unwarranted. It was replied, not without reason, that a sermon must make assumptions, that it could not pretend to prove everything *ab initio*. But, really, the assumptions complained of were generally current, and had existed in a more or less stereotyped form since the end of the second century. It was really in criticism like that of Hatch and Hort that there might be discerned the breath of a new spirit, the more modern spirit that calls itself 'science'. I would not deny that in the earlier manifestations of this spirit as it appears in the writers named, and especially when it is looked at from the point of view of one in search of dogmatic principles, there might well seem to be an element of exaggeration. Hatch was a thorough modernist, and his modernism took a form akin to that of natural science; he was always looking out for natural analogies; and his method might be described as building up piecemeal 'from below'. On these lines he did a great deal of excellent work in its way. Hort was not exactly a modernist; he had a larger background (which he

would not have disowned) of philosophy, if not of dogma ; and he was not out of sympathy with ancient modes of thinking. But a more scrupulous investigator can have hardly ever lived ; he had the keenest eye for differences and logical extensions ; he would avoid like poison a statement that seemed to be in excess of the evidence. And when he had once arrived at a restricted conclusion, the restriction would be apt to cling to him, even where it was less clearly justified. There were obvious openings for disagreement here with a mind like Dr. Gore's, somewhat impatient of fine distinctions, and fond of bold affirmations of principle.

Really both books, Dr. Hort's and Bishop Gore's, fall above the chronological line (1897) from which I started ; but the statement made at the outset is, I believe, broadly true. Dr. Gore and Dr. Moberly —as representatives of Anglicanism, and in many ways of the stricter Anglicanism—leave no doubt as to their position. On the Nonconformist side, the most important works that have appeared during the period are Dr. T. M. Lindsay's Cunningham Lectures for 1902, *The Church and the Ministry in the Early Centuries* (ed. 4, 1910), and a group of detached papers by Dr. Vernon Bartlet, of Oxford [articles in *The Contemporary Review* for July, 1897, August, 1898 (with A. J. Carlyle), April, 1902 ; in *The Churchman* for June, 1909 ; and the chapter on 'Organization and Discipline' in *The Apostolic Age* (Edinburgh, 1900), and a paper read at the Third International

Congregational Council (1908)]. Dr. Lindsay writes as a Presbyterian, and Dr. Bartlet as a Congregationalist. In both cases the standpoint is very clear, and (in Dr. Bartlet's especially) followed out in close detail.

Within the last three years valuable help has come from Germany. First, an elaborate article by Harnack on 'Verfassung (kirchliche)' in Hauck-Herzog, *Realencyklopädie f. prot. Theologie u. Kirche*, Band xx (Leipzig, 1908); reprinted with additions, 1910, and now accessible in an excellent English translation in Williams & Norgate's Crown Library (1910). Between the article and the reprint a paper, entitled 'Wesen und Ursprung des Katholizismus', by Rudolph Sohm—the author of the well-known and standard work *Kirchenrecht* (Band i, 1892)—was read and published in the Transactions of the Saxon Academy of Sciences (Philol.-Hist. Klasse, Band xxvii, No. 10). This paper was largely a criticism of Harnack, though the two writers have much in common which is duly acknowledged on both sides; and Harnack replied at length in the reprinted volume (this reply is included in the E.T.). The rather strange and isolated position taken up by Sohm is stated with great precision, and can leave no one in doubt. Harnack is also well known as a lucid writer; and, although he does not formally cross-examine himself, he too is quite sufficiently explicit. He is before all things an historian, and he treats his subject historically. I propose to concern

myself in the present paper chiefly with these two writers, with a certain amount of retrospect and comparison; in a future article I hope to bring another writer into view, whose work is not yet generally accessible.

I

I doubt if there is any older scholar to whom the *history* of the Christian ministry owes more than it does to Harnack. His translation of Hatch's Bamptons (1883) contributed in the form of appended 'Analecta' matter of its own that was valuable in its way. But this was really of less importance than the editions of early documents (the *Didache* and the so-called *Apostolic Church Order*) which appeared in the *Texte u. Untersuchungen* three years later. Both these editions were much more than the mere publication of texts. Harnack was, I believe, the first to grasp the full significance of what is now commonly called 'the charismatic' as compared with the local ministry —that is, the extraordinary ministry arising from the exercise of the so-called 'spiritual gifts' as distinct from the regular official executive of the local churches. This was, indeed, clear enough from many passages of St. Paul's Epistles, especially 1 Corinthians xii–xiv; but the discovery of the *Didache* helped conspicuously to throw it into relief and to

set it in its true place in the historical order of development. With his usual quickness of apprehension Harnack saw this at once, and described the position with so much force that retrograde movement on the point was made impossible. The examination of the history of the office of 'Reader' attached to the second essay was another solid contribution on a point of typical importance. In his highly suggestive book, *The Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries* (E.T., ed. 1, 1904–5; ed. 2, augmented, 1909), he returned to the subject. And now he has reviewed it systematically in a dictionary article which is a model of comprehensiveness and conciseness.

The first thing that strikes us in this article is the growth and development of the author's mind since he first began the study of the question. No leading theologian of this generation has shown more candour and open-mindedness than Harnack; and the consequence is that movement with him has been all in the right direction. He has described it himself as in many ways a 'return to tradition'. Not a few of his own countrymen have reproached him for this; but we in this country have followed his career with increasing sympathy and admiration. It has seemed to us to be just what was needed, a gradual stripping off of the hypercriticism that had become too fashionable and a deepening of religious interest and insight in equal proportion. Harnack is always living and human; he is not overweighted by his vast learning;

he is imaginative without being extravagant, and his grasp of positive truth is not weakened by chilling scepticism.

These qualities seem to me to be present in a high degree in the volume of which I am speaking. And the advance in them is clearly marked. I wonder how far the author himself is conscious of it. I do not notice much of the nature of retractation or self-correction; and yet there is a good deal of difference in the emphasis on different points, and especially on the positive side as compared with the negative. This comes out when we place the new volume by the side of the first in the series, the translation and discussion of Hatch.

At that stage Harnack was engaged in an eager study of the surroundings in which Christianity had developed. He was apt to catch at the analogies in pagan religion; and the attention paid to these was part of the attraction that Hatch's work had for him. He wrote in his Preface to the translation:

> The safe starting-points for the investigation of the constitutional relations of the churches in antiquity were found by the author, not in the history of doctrine, but in the social and political position of the communities in the Roman Empire, or rather in the changes which they underwent. The designations of the different offices which came up gradually in the Church are examined by him in accordance with a strict method; by comparing them with the similar designations of contemporary offices outside

the communities and obtaining by a complete induction a clear picture of the situation of the churches in the different centuries, he arrived at conclusions that were already fixed before he went on to the interpretation of the literary sources, on which in the past the most important decisions had been made to depend.

This method is, of course, not wholly discarded, but at the same time different language is used about it. For instance, in such passages as the following:

We must therefore accept with the greatest caution the theories that ancient Christian institutions are to be carried back to the heathen religious societies; recourse to such an explanation as this is more appropriate in the face of later conditions (*Constitution*, &c., p. 89).

The latest detailed treatment of the influence of the Roman politico-religious organization (emperor-worship) on the organization of the Church is given by Lübeck. Desjardins, Barthélemy, Monceaux, and Perrot have maintained that from the beginning the influence was far-reaching, while the opposite view has been upheld by Beurlier and Duchesne. I am unable to perceive any trace of this influence, except some involuntary, though not unimportant, developments on the Christian side, which may be traced to analogy (the worship of the emperor was built up on the division of the empire into provinces) (p. 164, n.).

In the development of the organization of Gentile Christianity, the heathen religious societies, the politico-religious organization of the empire, the municipal and provincial organization, and lastly, though perhaps only in certain localities, the orga-

nization of the philosophical schools—all these had, strictly speaking, only so much influence as they exercised unconsciously—an influence, too, of which the Gentile-Christian communities in their progressive development had not the least suspicion. The churches (or in some cases particular circles in them) automatically imitated these organizations; or, rather, compelled by necessity, directed their activities into the channels which already traversed the land, rejecting, however, in the process everything that savoured of polytheism. We may thus certainly say, with some reservations, that the above-mentioned organizations had their share in the constitution of the Church; but yet it is misleading to assert that the Christian communities organized themselves on the model of heathen 'religious societies' or of civic 'corporations', much less on the model of 'philosophical schools', for it should not be forgotten that the chief points of resemblance in external form which they had in common with the religious societies, philosophical schools, &c., sprang from the inner principle of the Christian societies themselves (p. 167 f.).

All this is carefully weighed; but the point on which the later language differs most from the earlier is contained in the last clause, i.e. in the greater stress that is laid on the working of 'the inner principle of the Christian societies themselves'. I am glad to believe that on all sides of the history of the Early Church Harnack sees the importance of this working more clearly than he did, and that he would ascribe to it a larger proportion of influence on the real course of events.

When Hatch delivered his Bampton Lectures in

1880 there was an impression that he was secularizing his subject, that he was assigning an excessive weight to secondary and secular causes. His method was described as an attempt to explain the origin of the Christian ministry by action 'from below' rather than 'from above'. He himself anticipated and demurred to this kind of description:

> There are some, no doubt, who will think that to account for the organization of the Church in this way is to detract from the nobility of its birth, or from the divinity of its life. There are some who can see a divinity in the thunder-peal, which they cannot see in the serenity of a summer noon, or in the growth of the flowers of spring. . . . [Man himself is a product of evolution, and yet he is a monument of divine power, and manifestation of divine life. . . .] And so, it may be—nor is it a derogation from its grandeur to say that it *was*—out of antecedent and, if you will, lower forms, out of existing elements of human institutions, by the action of existing forces of human society, swayed as you will by the breathing of the Divine Breath, controlled as you will by the Providence which holds in its hand the wayward wills of men no less than the courses of the stars, but still out of elements, and by the action of forces, analogous to those which have resulted in other institutions of society, and other forms of government, came into being that widest and strongest and most enduring of institutions which bears the sacred name of the Holy Catholic Church. The divinity which clings to it is the divinity of order (*B.L.*, p. 19 f.).

I am not sure that I am quite satisfied with this, although it really contains the root of the matter.

It does this, but it is a little too cold and has about it a little too much of a philosophical afterthought. The old Hebraic language seems to me better, which sees everywhere in events the hand of 'the living God', and sees it in intenser degree in all that is in any way bound up with the great Divine plan for the redemption of mankind.

I cannot help thinking that this may be one of the reconciling influences of the future. The contemplation of the hand of God in history, the close-knit process of continuous adjustment and growth by which institutions are formed, may well have a deep attraction for minds that are not impressed by the spectacle of human authority as such. Hitherto the study of history has often been too one-sided, a search for one set of precedents at the expense of others. But as history becomes more of a science, as the conscience of the historian becomes more acute, there will be a greater readiness to take facts as they stand and to believe that they are part of a divine order.

It must be confessed that Hatch's presentation of the origin of the Ministry did seem to be upon the lower plane. It did seem to lay stress on the lower order of causation, rather than on the higher. It did seem to be conceived in the interest of Naturalism; the religious significance of the process seemed to recede into the background. It is not surprising that it should be called a theory of development 'from below' rather than 'from above'.

I would, indeed, join with Dr. Lindsay in deprecating this, as in many ways a false antithesis:

> When the question is put: 'Must ministerial character be in all cases conferred from above, or may it sometimes, and with equal validity, be evolved from below?' it appears to me that a fallacy lurks in the antithesis. 'From below' is used in the sense 'from the membership of the Church', and the inference suggested by the contrast is that what comes 'from below'—i.e. from the membership of the Church—cannot come 'from above'—i.e. cannot be of divine origin, warrant, and authority. Why not? May the Holy Spirit not use the membership of the Church as His instrument? Is there no real abiding presence of Christ among His people? Is not this promised Presence something which belongs to the sphere of God, and may it not be the source of an authority which is 'from above'?—*The Church and the Ministry*, p. ix f.[1]

I believe this criticism to be true. And yet there are different ways of presenting a process seen from below; and that adopted by Dr. Hatch, and by Harnack in agreement with him, was hardly the most spiritual.

But, whatever the attitude of the German theologian eight-and-twenty years ago, he has redressed the balance now. It is true that his new book is in the main a dictionary article, and that this particular form does not exactly lend itself to warmth of religious expression. But, although somewhat

[1] The same point is made in various places by Dr. Bartlet.

repressed, the warmth is really there; or, rather, the fundamental conception is such as to generate inevitably the feeling of religious warmth.

This comes out in a number of places in which Harnack speaks of the religious idea of 'the Church' as determining the form of the ministry. He calls it 'an evolution from the whole to the part', as opposed to, and balanced by, 'the gathering up of the parts into a whole'.

> On the one hand, the whole [the idea of the Church] is a product of the parts; therefore it cannot be, and is not meant to be, much more than an 'idea'. The central organization and the local organization are in perpetual strife with one another, just because each needs the other, and the death of the one must of necessity involve the decay of the other. The whole constitutional history of the Church can be represented with the conflict of these two powers as its framework (*op. cit.*, p. 42).

In somewhat more concrete expression:

> The communities are subject to the Word of God (or of the Lord) and the paternal discipline of the apostle who founded them: but in so far as the Spirit rules them, this Spirit is granted to the community as a whole and as a unity, and the officials and personages are in the position of members in this unity, and not above it. This follows from the nature of the communities which not only share the name 'church' (ἐκκλησία) with the general community of God, but every one of which is a finished picture of the Church as a whole, and indeed its consummation (for the whole is in the part and not merely the part in the whole). Ideally, and from

the religious point of view, there is therefore no difference at all, however paradoxical this may seem, between the general community and the individual community . . . but in actual fact it was naturally not possible or desirable that this difference should be abolished; rather, it made itself more and more strongly felt. The ideal unity of the two lies in the working of the Spirit (p. 46).

As a significant piece of evidence for what the individual community was ideally, appeal is naturally made to the current phrase 'the Church of God which *sojourneth in*' Rome, Corinth, or the like (reff., p. 47).

Again, more in the abstract:

The Christian community in every individual city is not only a 'Church of God' (ἐκκλησία τοῦ θεοῦ), but, like the latter, it belongs properly to heaven; here on earth it is only a transitory sojourner in a strange land. It is thus a heavenly entity—i. e. fundamentally not a particular community, but a manifestation of the whole in the part (p. 48).

It is a satisfaction to note that language such as this would be abundantly and heartily endorsed by the most religious minds among our own Nonconformists. For instance, this is the way in which a quotation from Hort is commented upon by Dr. Vernon Bartlet (we may discount a little in the first sentence):

Over against this large Protestant Catholicism, docile to the teachings of Divine Providence in modern times, as well as in the remote past, stands

the shadow of a *doctrinaire* Catholicism which is a mere clericalism unworthy the noble name of High Churchmanship. This latter is the peculiar prerogative of no one Church, and of no one school or party in a Church. It exists in all those who feel that the Christian society, in any one of its many forms and in them all, has a high function to perform in the economy of human redemption; and who are ready to sacrifice personal wishes in order to foster its fellowship as defined by Christ and His apostles (*The Contemporary Review*, 1897, p. 84).

Of course, there is something of opposition (and it may be something also of misunderstanding!) in this. Before I have done (perhaps not in this article) I shall try to do something towards removing this. But in the meantime, I believe it to be a fact of great importance that our friends on the other side the border have a doctrine of the Church which is so genuinely, and in the best sense, a 'high' doctrine. I see in this another influence that I should hope may be really unifying.

It is characteristic of Sohm's essay that he, too, lays stress on the religious idea of the Church, though only to draw from it the unnecessary and paradoxical inference that the Church on earth needs no formal constitution and can only admit of one by a contradiction of its essential nature.

'The Church of Christ,' he says:

the fact that there is upon earth a 'holy Christian people', redeemed by Christ, translated by faith out of the bondage of servants into the adoption of sons,

bearing in itself life from God, can only be believed and not seen. The Church of Christ is an object of *belief* (or faith), therefore for the believer it is necessarily visible (in Word and Sacrament), but just as necessarily invisible to the world (in forms of Law). The invisibility of the Church of Christ removes it of necessity from the region of Law. The legally constituted Church can never, as such, be the Church of Christ, and therefore can never speak in the name of the Church of Christ, can never enforce its ordinances as the ordering of the Church of Christ, as the ordering of the life of Christian men with God, because the Church of Christ is beyond the range of all legal order (*Wesen u. Ursprung d. Katholizismus*, p. 11 f.).

The writer does not seem to see—or, if he sees, he does not acknowledge—that by describing the Church as the Church *on earth*, and as visible partially (in Word and Sacrament), he thereby makes room for a yet larger degree of visibility, which may bring it, and in practice is found to bring it, within the domain of law. This legal aspect may not be on the same level as the religious aspect, but it, too, is real.

II

It is time that I tried to give some idea of the leading points in the conception which Harnack now puts forward. I believe that I can do so best by singling out some of his most significant passages

in regard to the Church and its most important officials, the presbyters and bishops. In quoting, I shall venture to omit references and other insertions which interrupt the flow of the argument.

The name 'the Church' ('Qāhāl') was the happiest stroke which the primitive community accomplished in the way of descriptive titles (that it goes back to Jesus Himself is not very probable, in spite of Matt. xvi. 18, xviii. 17). Paul found it already in use, and indeed in three different senses: as a general name for those who believed in Christ, 'those of the Church,' as meaning the individual community, and as meaning the assembling together of the community. The primitive community took over the most solemn expression which Judaism used for the whole body of the people in relation to the worship of God ('Qāhāl'—in the Septuagint translated as a rule by 'church', ἐκκλησία, is the community in its relation to God, and is therefore more solemn than the profaner term 'ēdhāh', which is always translated 'synagogue', συναγωγή, by the Septuagint. The adoption of ἐκκλησία is thus to be understood in the same way as that of 'Israel', 'seed of Abraham', &c. Among the Jews ἐκκλησία was not so much used as συναγωγή in the everyday life of that period, and this was very favourable for the Christians). The many-sided usage, together with the religious colouring—the community called of God—as well as the possibility of personification, quickly brought the conception and the word into prominence, and the allied conception, 'the people' (ὁ λαός) could not keep its place as a technical term as opposed to ἐκκλησία. Just because the Christians possessed the title ἡ ἐκκλησία, it was unnecessary to take over the name ἡ συναγωγή, which, it is true, was not anxiously

avoided, but yet seldom employed. Just as they were no mere body of pupils (in contrast with the Twelve and the apostles), so also they were not a synagogue, like the Libertines or the Cilicians. They were a community called of God and ruled by the Spirit—i. e. something entirely new, but for this very reason the realization of the old ideal. . . . The conception of the Church originally contained no authoritative element; but every spiritual entity which presents itself as a society partly ideal and partly real contains within itself from the beginning such an element: it is 'prior to' the individual; it has its traditions and ordinances, its special powers and organization. These are authoritative; in addition it supports the individual and at the same time assures him of the validity of that to which it bears witness. . . . The greatest importance, however, attached to the fact that Paul (was he the first?) inaugurated a speculative theory of Christ in relation to the Church, which indeed is founded on the old idea of the covenant of God with His people. . . . In this speculation the Church became a heavenly and an earthly (because 'manifested') Being at the same time, and participated in all statements which were made concerning Christ. The Church is in heaven; it was created before the world; it is the Eve of the heavenly Adam; it is the bride of Christ, the body of Christ; it is in a certain sense Christ Himself, appearing conjointly with Him from heaven in this final period. What Tertullian has summed up in the words 'In a company of two is Christ, but the Church is Christ. When, then, you cast yourself at the brethren's knees, you are handling Christ, you are entreating Christ'—it is this combination of loftiest simplicity and extravagant mysticism which men kept before them with greater or less clearness in the widest circles and almost from the beginning.

It was comforting, it imposed a serious obligation, and it was a rapturous thought full of power from on high, that the Christian, as a member of the Church, not only has his rights of citizenship in heaven, but is also a member of the body of Christ: yet the responsibility grew in proportion, and the glorious crown might also be a terrible burden (pp. 15–18).

The writer of this striking passage shows a real grasp of the place which the idea of the Church held in the life of the early Christians.

Among the 'assumptions' which Hatch laid to the charge of Canon Liddon, one was 'that Jesus Christ founded, whether mediately or immediately, a visible society or group of societies'. And other writers have questioned the same assumption, on the ground that there is no passage in the Gospels that unequivocally describes such foundation. Harnack, while he calls the name 'the Church' ('Qāhāl') 'the happiest stroke which the primitive community accomplished in the way of descriptive titles', thinks it not very probable that it goes back to Jesus Himself, 'in spite of Matt. xvi. 18, xviii. 17' (p. 15). I cannot agree on the question of probability; for it seems to me that Harnack himself has removed the greatest difficulty that stands in the way. I venture to print in italics the first sentence of the following quotation, because it seems to me to be of great importance:

The Church is younger and older than Jesus. It existed in a certain sense long before Him. It was

founded by the prophets, in the first place within Israel, but even at that time it pointed beyond itself. All subsequent developments are changes of form (p. 4 n.).

It may be true that in strict accuracy our Lord did not 'found the Church', because it was already founded. And yet it was not exactly the Jewish Church of which He spoke, because (as in so many other ways) He prophetically transferred the title to the society which He saw would grow out of the conditions which He was creating. There cannot be any real improbability in the attribution to Christ of a word that occurs about a hundred times in the LXX, and that is found in full possession in the earliest Epistles of St. Paul. We may say that our Lord must have used the word, perhaps, in the first instance, without more specific application, but its meaning moved onwards with the course of events.

Perhaps the most summary passage in which Harnack deals with the origin of the terms 'presbyter' and 'bishop' is the following. It is dashed off in bold and vigorous strokes, and it does not attempt to discriminate fine shades of probability; but its merit is that as a theory it is not too rigid but free and flexible, and that it keeps open more possibilities than one—which, where so much has to be left to conjecture, is advisable.

'Presbyter' may denote simply the old as opposed to the young; it may be a title of honour (by which personal excellence as well as the quality of

representing an older authoritative period [= a witness of tradition] is marked); it can also denote the elected and formally appointed member of a council (γερουσία). The use of the word in its different meanings within the Christian communities may be derived from the synagogue—this is the most natural assumption—or from the municipal constitutions, or it may have arisen spontaneously. In the same way the bishops (ἐπίσκοποι) may be derived from the Septuagint; they may have been copied from the municipal administrations, but they may also—and this is the most probable view—have arisen spontaneously. The word always signifies an overseer, curator, superintendent; but as to what the supervision is concerned with, it contains no indication. It may be souls, and then the word is equivalent to pastors, ποιμένες (see 1 Pet. ii. 25, 'the shepherd and overseer of your souls' . . .), but it may also be buildings, economic affairs, &c., or it may be a combination of the two (p. 58 f.).

This describes the functions of the bishop as they appeared at the beginning of the process of development (in the last quarter, or rather more, of the first century). And then, at the end of the process (say, a hundred years later) the picture presented is somewhat as follows:

The bishop, just because he is monarch in the community, is its head and functionary in every relation. He represents the community in the eyes of God (in sacrifice and prayer); he represents the community in the eyes of the sister-communities (by epistles and the reception of strangers coming from other communities); he represents the community in the eyes of the outer world; and, lastly, by his

administration of the sacraments and by his teaching, he represents God and Christ to the community (p. 121).

I suppose that in this, for the date given, all scholars would be practically agreed.

The question, then, is how we are to conceive of the process of transition. In other words, what is the origin of the monarchical episcopate (e.g. as it appears in the Ignatian Letters)? Here, again, Harnack shall speak for us:

It follows from this exposition that in the very earliest period presbyters and bishops here and there coincided, so that every duly appointed presbyter was also called a bishop. But quick and decisive was the victory of the form of expression according to which only the officials who played an active and leading part in the assembly of the community and in the care of the poor were called 'bishops' (without losing the name 'presbyter' or their place in the college of presbyters). This victory—'bishop' (ἐπίσκοπος) is a higher name and probably has nothing to do originally with the secular ἐπίσκοπος of a city, but only with the ἐπίσκοπος Christ [The reference is to such passages as 1 Pet. ii. 25; Ign. Eph. vi. 1; Magn. vi. 1, xiii. 2; Trall. iii. 1; Rom. ix. 1]; at a later period analogies may have been set up, and here and there these may have been of importance, but this cannot be proved—[this victory] is obviously a proof of the increasing importance of the care of the poor and of the service in the assembly of the community, which more and more resolved itself into the conducting of public worship, now beginning to establish itself in a fixed form. But the function of the bishops and deacons (especially, however, of

the former) must have completely differentiated itself from that of the presbyters in general, when, owing to the lack of prophets and teachers, they were charged with the function of building up by means of the Word (τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ λαλεῖν), and other duties which these inspired men had hitherto performed (p. 92; the evidence that follows of the increasing estimation of the bishop is very pertinent).

As regards the question of the origin of the monarchical office, it is extremely significant that it developed in connexion with the problem of organization. Organization came within the sphere of the officials in charge of public worship, who also had in their hands the administration of the funds and the care of the poor. These officials in charge of the worship are already mentioned by Paul (Philippians); Clement not only carries back their appointment to the apostles, but also knows of an apostolical injunction dealing with the lasting necessity of such an office of overseer (ἐπισκοπή), while Hermas connects them with the apostles and teachers, and the *Didache* with the prophets and teachers (similar assertions are not made about the office of the presbyters). Since we are deprived of almost every direct source of information concerning the origin of the monarchy of the bishop, we are thrown back upon hypotheses. In connexion with these we must be mindful of the saying of Salmon: 'If the original constitution of the Church was not the same as in the time of Irenaeus, it must at least have been capable of an inner development to the later form, and indeed in the form of quite gradual changes, called forth by causes universal in their nature' (p. 96).

Harnack goes on to specify a number of causes which contributed to the concentration of powers in the hands of the bishop:

(i) Probably where the monarchy of the leading apostle (prophet or teacher) in a local community lapsed, there was from the beginning a kind of informal monarchy, i.e. the college of ruling presbyters needed, like all colleges, a president, and the community likewise needed an executive official. . . .

(ii) When public worship began to assume fixed forms and a ritual developed and established itself, it was natural that the leadership should come more and more into the hands of an individual; indeed, the celebration of the Eucharist perhaps required from the beginning a single leader. . . .

(iii) Intercourse also with external bodies required a single representative to conduct the business of the community. . . .

(iv) In this connexion it will also be allowable to lay special emphasis on the teaching given, and on the protection of the communities from Gnostic errors by the appointment of a single authoritative teacher. . . .

(v) The putting forward of lists of bishops (after the last quarter of the second century: in Rome, Antioch, Corinth, &c.) would have been an impudent falsification, which could not possibly have succeeded, if from an early period a single individual had not thus stood out as *primus inter pares* in the presbyteral college of many communities (in the sense in which Clement comes forward as author in the Roman Epistle to Corinth). Just for this very reason it is quite impossible to say when the monarchical episcopate really began. It developed by a gradual process of differentiation, though the fundamental tendency was not at the beginning monarchical in character. [See, however (i) above; I do not think that more can be meant than the original equivalence of presbyter and bishop.]

(vi) There was another reason why the develop-

ment towards monarchy could never appear as a break with the past, viz. in many matters the bishop, even after he had become monarchical, acted in the same way as before, namely, as a fellow-presbyter along with the college of presbyters. . . . (pp. 96–100).

On all these points the substantial difference between scholars would not be great. Harnack himself says, in a note at the end of his sketch:

If this account be compared with that given by Duchesne (*Early History of the Christian Church*, pp. 62 ff.) the difference is apparently extremely small, but that it is a significant one is shown by such a sentence as this, on p. 66: 'Whether they (the communities) had one bishop at their head or whether they had a college of several, the episcopate carried on the apostolic succession.' As regards the beginnings this is incorrect.

III

This last statement brings me to what I believe are, from our present point of view, the most important paragraphs in the whole of Harnack's book; namely, those which deal with the question of Apostolical Succession. It will be seen from these precisely how much the difference from Duchesne really amounts to. I have already quoted copiously from the Berlin Professor, and I must go on to quote still more. But I believe that he will forgive me, because I have really no choice in the

matter. He is at once the most illustrious and the best witness that can possibly be produced; and it is essential that he should speak in his own words, and not in any fallible paraphrase of mine. He writes as follows:

An attribute of quite special importance is proclaimed quite clearly in the West as early as the end of the second century, i.e. the attribute of the Apostolical Succession of the bishops. In that epoch of civilization, ideas of succession were by no means unusual; they generally took the form of mystical conceptions and legal fictions. These, however, are based on a very true analysis of experience, since there is hardly anything which gives a greater feeling of confidence and stability (if one does not go beyond a superficial view) than the chain of regular successions in an office or calling, or in connexion with the transmission of a doctrine regarded as a deposit. Precedents and limitations necessarily grow up in connexion with any office, as well as ideas of what is inevitably involved in it, and these influence not only the outside public but also the holders of the office or the custodians of the deposit, and confer upon these men, as a kind of permanent stamp, a characteristic temperament and reputation, as though the originator of the whole chain were in some sort incarnate in them all. And even where the succession is not felt so vividly or taken so literally, still the chain seems at least to afford a guarantee that here everything is preserved unchanged, though in truth this is a great error, for nothing living can escape the transforming influence of time. In that age all authority was represented by successions, which rendered unnecessary and forbade any real examination of what the authority commanded.

But the whole question turns upon this. The Roman constitution and law rested on successions, and the same applied equally to the philosophical schools of the period. Judaism, too, had its successions.[1] Long before there was any thought of the apostolic succession of the bishops, successions were to be met with in the Church itself, namely, the succession of teachers, who had once been disciples of older teachers (and so on right up to the apostles), and the succession of the prophets. How inevitable was the thought of succession in connexion with the possession of a deposit of doctrine is shown on the one hand by the Pastoral Epistles (see e. g. 2 Tim. ii. 2, 'and the things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also') and on the other by the Gnostic sects, which laid the greatest stress on the successions of their teachers right up to the apostles. Under such circumstances it is rash to refer the apostolic succession of the bishops solely to the influence of Roman legal ideas (Tschirn, *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, xii, pp. 220–31), although these may have co-operated as a strong secondary factor. If the right doctrine of God was the main thing in the Church, on which everything else was built, and if the monarchical bishops had become despotic leaders and teachers . . . there is no great need to ask whence and why the idea of succession was transferred to them. It was bound to come in of itself, and even the fact that very soon it was applied exclusively to the

[1] We remember the regular Talmudic formula for the succession of Rabbis: Antigonos of Socho received from Symeon the Just; Shemaiah and Abtalion received from Jehudah ben Tabai and Symeon ben Shatach; Hillel and Shammai received from these, and so on: παράδοσις ('handing on') was a key-word of Judaism.

bishops and all other successions disappeared, needs no explanation, for it is only a special case in the general development of the episcopate, which vanquished all other rivals. The sole point that demands an explanation is the fact that it is only the apostolate in the form of the apostolate of the Twelve which is brought in as the starting-point of the chain of succession. Their introduction presupposes the dying out of the general body of apostles, and at the same time the necessity, imposed by the conflict with the Gnostics, of carrying back everything in the Church to the eyewitnesses, and of connecting the means of proof afforded by the apostles with the thing to be proved—i.e. the adoration of the Crucified and Risen God-Man. The theory that the bishops received by succession (*per successionem*) the true Gospel as a charisma from the apostles, that therefore as teachers they represent in their combined testimony the apostles (namely, the Twelve—Paul only occupies a secondary position), and that only in this way is the truth preserved in the churches (*veritas in ecclesiis custoditur*), would probably have established itself without the conflict with the Gnostics, but in point of fact it did develop in consequence of that conflict. We meet with the theory first in Irenaeus and Tertullian. . . .

Like every element in the organization of the Church, however new it may appear, this apostolicity of the bishops had its preparatory stages, going beyond what was already fully developed. These stages consisted in the putting of the shepherds alongside the apostles, prophets, and teachers in the Epistle to the Ephesians; the setting of the bishops alongside the apostles in Hermas, and the fact that the duty of teaching, which at an earlier period had been discharged by the apostles and teachers, now devolved first upon the bishops as a body, and then

upon the individual bishop. The way was also prepared by the personalities of particular bishops, whose virtue and force of character gained for them an apostolic reputation which was then transferred to the whole order of bishops. . . .

It followed as a necessary consequence of the conception of the apostolicity of the bishops that the ancient, and partly correct, tradition that the apostles had appointed the officials of the Church now became specialized, and it was asserted that the apostles (or in such cases always a single apostle) had appointed the bishops in the individual communities [1] . . . The apostolical character of the episcopate, which was the crown and culmination of its dignity, raised it high above the presbyters, and so immediately restored to it the pre-eminence and reputation which it seemed likely to lose through being placed on the same level as the presbyters in their capacity of priests. . . . As individuals the presbyters were probably not very important where the community was small and there was only one assembly for worship in a place, but no doubt they gained in importance where there were several such assemblies, for then they were commissioned by the bishop to conduct the services of the branch congregations, and he needed their advice and help in the numerous and important matters which came before him (pp. 122–9).

It is safe to say that never before has the idea of succession from the Apostles been analysed in a

[1] It is doubtless right to speak of this tradition, so far as the claim is made for the Twelve, as only 'partly correct'; but if 'apostle' is taken in the wider sense, and as standing for the whole class of 'apostles and prophets' it would have more foundation. The distinction between the two senses of 'apostle' was gradually forgotten.

manner nearly so searching. We see how it strikes down roots and fibres into the soil out of which it springs; and we become aware how naturally, and even inevitably, it grows out of the conditions by which it is surrounded. Only one who was possessed at once of a very full knowledge of these conditions, of the imaginative gift of presenting them to the mind's eye in living interaction, and of keen insight into the connexion of effect and cause, could have produced such a picture. The upshot seems to be that the doctrine of Apostolic Succession represents a real continuity, expressed in the relative and symbolical form appropriate to the time.

Of course the method by which this is brought out is strictly historical, and not dogmatic. But that is just what I believe increases its importance. For, if I am not mistaken, the great desideratum at the present moment is the vivifying and correcting of dogmatic formulae by means of history. I must not say more about this now. The first step before us is to determine as nearly as we can the exact sequence of the historical facts; and the next step is to adjust the theoretic conclusions which we derive from them.

To this double task I hope to return in the next paper; to complete the historic picture with the help of some further material, and then to face directly the question or questions of principle.

NOTE.—Attention should be called to an important article on 'Apostolic Succession', by Dr. A. C. Headlam, in *The Prayer Book Dictionary* (London, 1912). This article deals with the whole subject, including the later history of the conception, in a very comprehensive manner. It draws a helpful distinction between Succession (*a*) as Orderly Sequence, (*b*) as Apostolic Commission, (*c*) as Continuity of Function, and (*d*) as Transmitting Grace. While the first three of these constituent ideas are affirmed, the fourth is questioned, as a late importation, developed chiefly in connexion with the Tractarian movement in the nineteenth century. This view is sure to receive further examination. Taken along with Harnack's treatise, the article suggests that, on the one hand, the idea of a continuous succession of the Christian Ministry from the Apostles will be seen to be deeply rooted in reason and history, but that, on the other hand, any rigid and mechanical application of the idea for the purpose of invalidating one form of ministry as compared with another is to be deprecated.

THE PRIMITIVE MODEL
(*continued*)

III

THE PRIMITIVE MODEL (*continued*)

[February, 1912]

We remember Matthew Arnold's satirical dictum: 'The spear of freedom, like that of Achilles, has the power to heal the wounds which itself makes.' It was written in jest, but there is a serious side to it, and it is true of other things besides freedom. The only real corrective for the ill effects of criticism is more and better criticism. And the only sure remedy for the ill effects of historical theory is historical theory revised and rectified.

The process is of this kind. An institution, or a group of institutions, comes down from the past, and for a long time it is passively accepted and prevails simply because it has so come down; the world acquiesces in it, and settles itself comfortably to sleep upon it. But after a while the great inert mass begins to stir; one here and another there rubs his eyes and awakes. Awkward questions are asked; and soon the old passive acceptance and acquiescence gives way. New theories are broached; there is a hubbub of debate and discussion in the air; sects and schools are formed, and rally round a few given types. These sects and schools keep

up their controversies; statements and counter-statements are constantly put forward; and by degrees points emerge one after another on which all the controversialists are agreed. Little by little these plots of agreement are enlarged and expand, and wider spaces are enclosed. Gradually the original process of division and separation is reversed; gaps are bridged over; walls of partition are thrown down, and ditches are filled in; till at last the broken and intersected surface is restored to order and continuity.

I

If I am not mistaken, something of this kind has been going on in regard to the old controversies about the Constitution of the Primitive Church. Different ideals have had their advocates. Arguments have been put forward on this side and on that. But even controversialists have a conscience; as time goes on, and historical methods become more fixed, the margin of possible difference is reduced; the strong points in opposing propositions obtain recognition; almost imperceptibly the advocates of different sides draw nearer to each other; they become less of advocates and more of disinterested historians. At last there arises a critic or historian who is really master of his craft. He steps into the

field, surveys it as a whole, and re-states the various *ex parte* contentions in such a way that discrepancies are removed and conflicting claims are satisfied. Sectional and partial opinions yield to the unifying force of truth.

In a previous paper we have followed a process like this in the footsteps of one who is probably the foremost critic of this generation (Prof. Harnack). And now we may place by the side of our conspectus of the results of analytic criticism a picture of the same ground drawn by the hand of a constructive historian. This too, if I can trust my own judgement, is a very masterly picture, based upon profound knowledge and traced upon the lines, not of this party or of that, but of strictly objective science.

The picture to which I refer is contained in the chapter on the 'Organization of the Church', contributed to the first volume of the *Cambridge Mediaeval History*, by Mr. Cuthbert H. Turner, of Magdalen College, Oxford. We have had to wait for the appearance of this volume,[1] though through the kindness of the author I had access to the paper before publication. The chapter is concerned primarily with the organization of the Church in the fourth century, but it is introduced by a sketch of

[1] It was published after more than one postponement, on November 15, 1911. I am indebted to the Syndics of the Cambridge Press for their kind permission to quote as freely as I have done.

the antecedent conditions, which, for all its brevity, is remarkably full and exact.

The chapter opens with an impressive statement of the double process, partly simultaneous and partly successive; on the one hand, the gradual articulation and differentiation of functions within itself of the single community, and on the other hand, the no less gradual union of these communities into a federated system. This double process is sketched in broad outline.

In the early days of Christianity the first beginnings of a new community were of a very simple kind: indeed the local organization had at first no need to be anything but rudimentary, just because the community was never thought of as complete in itself apart from its apostolic founder or other representatives of the missionary ministry. 'Presbyters' and 'deacons' no doubt existed in these communities from the first: 'presbyters' were ordained for each church as it was founded on St. Paul's first missionary journey; 'bishops and deacons' constitute, together with the 'holy people', the church of Philippi. These purely local officials were naturally chosen from among the first converts in each district, and to them were naturally assigned the duties of providing for the permanently recurring needs of Christian life, especially the sacraments of Baptism—St. Paul indicates that baptism was not normally the work of an apostle—and the Eucharist. But the evidence of the earlier epistles of St. Paul is decisive as to the small relative importance which this local ministry enjoyed: the true ministry of the first generation was the ordered hierarchy, 'first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly

teachers,' of which the apostle speaks with such emphasis in his first epistle to the Corinthians. Next, in due order, after the ranks of the primary ministry came the gifts of miracles—'then powers, then gifts of healing'—and only after these, wrapped up in the obscure designation of 'helps and governments', can we find room for the local service of presbyters and deacons. Even without the definite evidence of the Acts and the Pastoral Epistles and St. Clement of Rome, it would be already clear enough that the powers of the local ministry were narrowly limited, and that to the higher ministry, the exercise of whose gifts was not confined to any one community but was independent of place altogether, belonged not only the general right of supervision and ultimate authority over local churches, but also in particular the imparting of the gift of the Spirit, whether in what we call Confirmation or in what we call Ordination. In effect, the Church of the first age may almost be said to have consisted of a laity grouped in local communities, and a ministry that moved about from place to place to do the work of missionaries to the heathen, and of preachers and teachers to the converts. Most of St. Paul's epistles to churches are addressed to the community, the holy people, the brethren, without any hint in the title of the existence of a local clergy: the apostle and the Christian congregation are the two factors of primary account. The *Didache* shows us how right down to the end of the first century, in remoter districts, the communities depended on the visits of wandering apostles, or of prophets and teachers, sometimes wandering, sometimes settled, and how they held by comparison in very light esteem their presbyters and deacons. Even a well-established church, like that of Corinth, with half a century of history behind it, was able,

however unreasonably, to refuse to recognize in its local ministry any right of tenure other than the will of the community; and when the Roman church intervened to point out the gravity of the blow thus struck at the principle of Christian order, it was still the community of Rome which addressed the community of Corinth. And this custom of writing in the name, or to the address, of the community continued, a relic of an earlier age, well into the days of the strictest monarchical episcopacy: it was not so much the bishop's headship of the community as the multiplication of the clergy which . . . made the real gap between the bishop and his people.

Most of our documents then of the first century shew us the local churches neither self-sufficient nor self-contained, but dependent for all special ministries upon the visits of the superior officers of the Church. On the other hand, most of our documents of the second century—in its earlier years the Ignatian letters, and an ever-increasing bulk of evidence as the century goes on—shew us the local churches complete in themselves, with an officer at the head of each who concentrates in his hands both the powers of the local ministers and those also which had at first been reserved exclusively for the 'general' ministry, but who is himself as strictly limited in the extent of his jurisdiction to a single church as were the humbler presbyter-bishops from whom he derived his name.

I am ashamed to quote so much; but I think the reader will agree with me that it has not been possible either to stop or to omit. In a picture so nicely calculated every word tells, and every word seems to be necessary to the balance and completeness of the whole.

I am compelled to go on:

In those early days of episcopacy, among the diminutive groups of Christian 'strangers and sojourners' which were dotted over the pagan world of the second century, we must conceive of a quite special closeness of relation between a bishop and his people. Regularly in all cities—and it was in the provinces where city life was most developed that the Church made quickest progress—a bishop is found at the head of the community of Christians: and his intimacy with his people was in those primitive days unhindered by the interposition of any hierarchy of functionaries or attendants. His flock was small enough for him to carry out to the letter the pastoral metaphor, and to 'call his sheep by name'. If the consent of the Christian people had always been, as Clement of Rome tells us, a necessary preliminary to the ordination of Christian ministers in the case of the appointment of their bishop the people did not consent merely, they elected: not till the fourth century did the clergy begin to acquire first a separate and ultimately a predominant share in the process of choice. . . . [Illustrations follow.] . . . If it is true that in the first century the apostle-founder and the community as founded by him are the two outstanding elements of Christian organization, it is no less true that in the second century the twin ideas of bishop and people attain a prominence which throws all subordinate distinctions into the background. . . . But this personal relation of the bishop to his flock, which was the ideal of church administrators and thinkers from Ignatius to Cyprian, could only find effective realization in a relatively small community: the very success of the Christian propaganda, and the consequent increase everywhere of the numbers

of the Christian people, made some further development of organization imperative. . . . In the larger towns at least there could be now no question of personal acquaintance between the president of the community and all its members. No doubt it might have been possible to preserve the old intimacy at the cost of unity, and to create a bishop for each congregation. But the sense of civic unity was an asset of which Christians instinctively availed themselves in the service of religion. . . . [Illustrations follow.] . . . Both in East and West, in the largest cities as well as in the smallest, the society of the faithful was conceived of as an indivisible unit, and its oneness was expressed in the person of its one bishop. The παροικία of Christians in any locality was not like a hive of bees, which, when numbers multiplied inconveniently, could throw off a part of the whole, to be henceforward a complete and independent organism under separate control. The necessity for new organization had to be met in some way which would preserve at all costs the oneness of the body and its head.

It followed that the work and duties which the individual bishop could no longer perform in person must be shared with, or deputed to, subordinate officials. New offices came into being, in the course especially of the third century, and the growth of this *clerus* or clergy, and its gradual acquisition during the fourth and fifth centuries of the character of a hierarchy nicely ordered in steps and degrees, is a feature of ecclesiastical history of which the importance has not always been adequately realized.

It is one of the special contributions of the chapter from which I am quoting that it works out the history of this process—not quite for the first time,

for Harnack had again laid the foundations—but yet with unexampled fullness and precision. For details any one who wishes must go to the original. But the general description of the process is very important; and the parts relating to the presbyters and (in a less degree) the deacons, are for our purpose almost indispensable. I will try to give the very minimum that I can of these.

Of such a hierarchy the germs had no doubt existed from the beginning; and, indeed, presbyters and deacons were, as we have seen, older component parts of the local communities than were the bishops themselves. In the Ignatian theory bishops, presbyters, and deacons are the three universal elements of organization, 'without which nothing can be called a church' (*ad Trall.* 3). And the distinction between the two subordinate orders, in their original scope and intention, was just the distinction between the two sides of clerical office which in the bishop were in some sort combined, the spiritual and the administrative: presbyters were the associates of the bishop in his spiritual character, deacons in his administrative functions.

Our earliest documents define the work of presbyters by no language more commonly than by that which expresses the 'pastoral' relation of a shepherd to his flock: . . . But in proportion as the local organization became episcopal, the pastoral idea, and even the name of *ποιμήν*, concentrated itself upon the bishop. . . . Besides pastoral duties, however, the Pauline epistles bring presbyters into definite relation with the work of teaching. . . . It is probable enough that the second-century bishop shared this, as all other functions of the presbyterate: St. Poly-

carp is described by his flock as an 'apostolic and prophetic teacher': but, as differentiation progressed, teaching was one of the duties less easily retained in the bishop's hands, and our third-century authorities are full of references to the class known in Greek as οἱ πρεσβύτεροι καὶ διδάσκαλοι, in Latin as *presbyteri doctores.*

If presbyters were thus the bishop's counsellors and advisers where counsel was needed, his colleagues in the rites of Christian worship, his assistants and representatives in pastoral and teaching duties, the prototypes of the diaconate are to be found in the Seven of the Acts, who were appointed to disburden the apostles of the work of poor relief and charity, and to set them free for their more spiritual duties of 'prayer and ministering of the Word'. Quite similarly in the διάκονοι or 'servants' of the local church, the bishop found ready to hand a personal staff of clerks and secretaries. . . . Originally, as it would seem, deacons were not ministers of worship at all; the earliest subordinate office in the liturgy was that of reader. . . . But the process of transformation by which the diaconate became more and more a spiritual office began early, and one of its results was to degrade the readership by ousting it from its proper functions. . . .

But this development of the diaconate is only part of a much larger movement. In the greater churches at least an elaborate differentiation of functions and functionaries was in course of process during the third century. Under the pressure of circumstances, and the accumulation of new duties which the increasing size and importance of the Christian communities thrust upon the bishop, much which he had hitherto done for himself, and which long remained his in theory, came in practice to be done for him by the higher clergy. As they moved up

to take his place, they in turn left duties to be provided for: as they drew more and more to the spiritual side of their work, they left the more secular duties to new officials in their place. . . .

Promotion from one rank of the ministry to another was of course no new thing. In particular the rise from the diaconate to the presbyterate, from the more secular to the more spiritual office, was always recognized as a legitimate reward for good service. . . . But it was a serious and far-reaching development when, in the fourth century, the idea grew up that the Christian clergy consisted of a hierarchy of grades, through each of which it was necessary to pass in order to reach the higher offices. . . .

In spite of any occasional reassertions of the older freedom, it did nevertheless remain true that the *cursus* and all it stood for was gradually establishing itself as a real influence: and it stood for a body continually growing in size, in articulation, in strength, in dead weight, which drove in like a wedge between bishop and people, and fortified itself by encroachments on both sides. Doubtless it would have been natural in any case that bishop and people, no longer enjoying the old affectionateness of personal intercourse, should lose the sense of community and imperceptibly drift apart; but the process was at least hastened and the gap widened by the interposition of the *clerus*. It was no longer the laity, but the clergy alone, who were in direct touch with the bishop. Even the fundamental right of the people to elect their bishop slipped gradually from their hands into the hands of the clergy. Within the clerical class a continual and steady upward pressure was at work. The minor orders take over the business of the diaconate: deacons assert themselves against presbyters: presbyters in turn are no longer a body of counsellors to the

bishop acting in common, but, having of necessity begun to take over all pastoral relations with the laity, tend as parish priests to a centrifugal independence. The process of entrenchment within the parochial freehold was still only in its first beginnings: but already in the fourth century—when theologians and exegetes were feeling after a formal and scientific basis for what had been natural, instinctive, traditional—we find presbyters asserting the claim of an ultimate identity of order with the episcopate.

I am most reluctant to stop, though I am still far from having exhausted the portions directly relevant and cogent for the particular purpose which I have before me; the whole chapter is relevant and cogent for it. I must needs refer my readers to it as a whole. Unless I am much mistaken, the whole treatment of the growth of Christian organization is nothing less than classical.

II

What, then, is the net result, so far as we have gone? What does this new contribution offer towards the solution of our problem? In what relation does it stand to the competing ideals between which the Church of Christ has to make its choice? In particular we have to test its relation to the Congregational and Presbyterian ideals. I have called it classical; and, if it is classical, it is so specially from

the point of view of history. Of course I would not for a moment deprecate criticism. That is the first step in the process of testing. By all means let any one who thinks he can find a flaw in the statement, whether of fact or of inference, come forward and say so.

But, in the meantime, and at least so far as this present series of papers is concerned, I can only give my own opinion for what it is worth. The impression made upon me is of something more than what we ordinarily mean by sound and accurate history. In the paragraphs that I have quoted, and in the whole chapter from which they are taken, there is a certain quality which reminds me of that 'inevitableness' which Matthew Arnold ascribed to the poetry of Wordsworth. In this case it comes, not merely from the accuracy and admirable selection of the facts, but from what I would call the close-knit catenation throughout the chapter of effect and cause. I cannot remember a piece of historical writing in which this quality has impressed me so much. If the maxim holds good *vere scire est per causas scire*, then I conceive that the work of which I am speaking marks a height of knowledge that is seldom attained. The effect is to give one a feeling of security, a feeling of being upon solid ground which no criticism is likely to shake. I must leave it for time to show how far others will share in this feeling.

But, supposing for the moment that I am right

in this estimate—if I am right in my view that this chapter of *The Cambridge Mediaeval History* has the comprehensiveness and thoroughness that I attribute to it—I believe it may be taken as a test of the different ideals that have been based upon the study of the Early Church. I will leave it to others—especially to those who do not belong to our communion—to apply this test to the Church of England. I have myself ventured to apply it to the ideals of Congregationalism and Presbyterianism, with a result that I confess does not surprise me. The conclusion to which I come is that these ideals are—not by any means wrong, on the contrary, it seems to me that they have a great deal to say for themselves—but sectional and partial. They are true enough so far as they go; but they do not cover the whole ground. They do not reproduce the picture of the Early Church either literally or in principle and essence, but they are included and absorbed in it. It is as if a basket were set before us laden with all manner of fruit and flowers, and as if a hand were thrust into it, first here and then there, and took out at each place a handful of its contents. The fruit is genuine fruit, and the flowers are genuine flowers; but more of both is left behind.

This is what appears to me to have happened to the advocates of both the Congregational and Presbyterian ideals. Their method seems to be eclectic. The one takes a handful here, and the other takes

a handful there; but in each case it is a handful, and not the whole.

I willingly admit that, when one takes a competent exponent of the Congregational theory like Dr. Vernon Bartlet, or a competent exponent of the Presbyterian theory like Dr. T. M. Lindsay, one recognizes at once abundance of truth in both. I would invite them, or other writers on the same sides, to read through the lengthy statement which has preceded, and see if there is not sentence after sentence which has their cordial approval. I should myself have no difficulty in picking out such sentences, which could be placed in parallel columns with others of their own. And these would relate, not to secondary and unimportant matters, but to points that with them are points of principle. My criticism would relate, not—or in very rare cases—to that which they affirm, but to that which they deny. They seem to me to come to an end too soon; and the end is sometimes rather abrupt. There is a point at which their tone changes, and their language, which has hitherto been that of warm acceptance and sympathy, begins to be disparaging and condemnatory. That is not like the processes of nature; and it is there that such a statement as Mr. Turner's seems to me to have the advantage.

For instance, I feel sure that Dr. Bartlet will accept the attractive picture of the primitive Christian congregations—bishop and people in closest

touch with each other, the laity active, and the whole community eager in the cause of religion, and ready to incur for it sacrifice and martyrdom. And yet he has a tendency, both in this and in a still earlier stage, to minimize (as it seems to me) the influences which made for unity between the congregations. He can write a sentence like this:

> As a rule, the superior or more inspired ministry was one at large, while the humbler practical type was strictly localized, confined to the single congregation to which its holders belonged.[1]

And yet, although this superior ministry is distinctly recognized, and although stress is laid upon its higher endowment, when the field comes to be surveyed as a whole, its functions, and especially its unifying functions, seem to fall into the background. The local community is treated as a unit complete in itself. The idea of the collective Church —the Church as One—seems to be forgotten. What may be called the 'plastic force' inherent in it drops out of sight.

I can of course understand the fascination of the primitive stage. The early days of a religious society nearly always have a charm which appears to be lost as time goes on. When zeal is high, and discipleship select, and motives pure, and the selfish instincts in abeyance, the freshness of the dawn

[1] Paper read at the Third International Congregational Council (Edinburgh, 1908), *Report*, p. 214.

still seems to be abroad; the dust and heat of the journey are not yet felt. And these happy qualities are apt to be idealized even beyond what they deserve; the other side of the picture escapes us; survivals from the state before conversion (as we see them, for instance, in an epistle like First Corinthians) do not obtrude themselves upon the vision. All problems are easier so long as a society is small. That appears to me, if I may say so, to be the fallacy of Congregationalism. I do not blame it, because it is always good for us to be guided by an ideal; and the first days lend themselves to an ideal construction more readily than those which follow. But that which looks like degeneration, and is in fact within its limits really degeneration, is, after all, only the inevitable price that has to be paid for enlargement and expansion. All that is excellently brought out by Mr. Turner, and I have nothing to add to his exposition, much of which is new as well as true.

I do not wish to be controversial; I find no fault with those who adopt a Congregational ideal, so long as they keep within their own borders and do not make aggressive raids into the territory that lies outside them. I could only wish that they would accustom themselves to read history a little more dispassionately, and apply to all ages the same measure that they apply to some. Consequences that clearly follow from definite historical causes are not, as such, a proper subject for either praise

or blame. I would commend to those who think otherwise, or who write and speak as if they thought otherwise, certain wise words with which Dr. Hatch introduces his sketch of *The Growth of Church Institutions* (London, 1887).

> The differences are great when an ancient is put side by side with a modern form. But between the ancient and modern form lies a long series of changes, which are linked together by the strong bond of historical continuity, and which pass into one another by an almost imperceptible transition. Each link in the series carries with it its own justification, if it is found to be a natural and inevitable result of historical circumstances, a modification of an institution or a usage which was forced upon a community by the needs of a particular time. It is true that a change which has once established itself has not gained by the fact of such establishment a right to perpetuity; but, on the other hand, it does not follow that such a modification of a Christian institution should be abolished as soon as the historical circumstances which gave rise to it have passed away. We cannot, without risk of enormous loss, and only under the rarest circumstances, cut the moorings which bind us to the past (*op. cit.*, p. 5).

This book on *The Growth of Church Institutions* will be found very profitable reading, as taking up the story from the point at which Mr. Turner lays it down. It does for the Early Mediaeval period what he has done for the Patristic period. It continues, more especially for the West, the line of development which he has traced for the Roman Empire as a whole, but more particularly for the

East. The Congregational system is really, in its ultimate foundations, a product of a state of things that was characteristic of Graeco-Roman antiquity. It belongs of right to a civilization of which the unit is the small or moderate-sized city. It finds its exact model in countries like Italy or Syria or the western coasts of Asia Minor, which were just those that in the early centuries of the Christian era were most flourishing and in which Christianity spread with the greatest rapidity. The conditions were quite different in Gaul or Britain, where cities were few and where there were wide spaces of open country. Dr. Hatch has traced with great skill the effects that were due, on the one hand, to the planting of private chapels on the great landed estates, and, on the other hand, to the institution of missionary bishops which spread from the British Isles. These gradually passed into the large territorial sees that were characteristic of Feudalism. The process was so gradual, and so necessary and inevitable, that it is wrong to denounce it and give it a bad name.

This is one fruitful cause of the present-day opposition to Episcopacy. Its critics appear to be unable to get out of their minds the mediaeval conception of the bishop. He is still for them the 'proud prelate', the 'despot', and the 'autocrat'. I imagine that most of our Anglican bishops would tell a different tale. Except for the size of their dioceses, there is not much of the autocrat left

about them. If there is any autocracy in the Church of England, it is rather that of the parish priest entrenched within his freehold. No human institution is perfect. All alike are dependent upon the characters and dispositions of those who work them. If due allowance is made for this; if the various forms of pressure are considered from which limitations of freedom may come, the Anglican Church, even in its present condition, may well bear comparison with any. And it is always seeking to reform itself by the nicer adjustment of tasks and burdens.

III

So far as I can judge, it seems to me that in Harnack's book and Mr. C. H. Turner's monograph, taken together, we have a statement of the facts relating to Episcopacy from the side of the historian that will not easily be improved upon. It is true that Mr. Turner's half of this statement is focused primarily upon the fourth century, and that the earlier portion is an introduction leading up to this, and subordinated to it. If the author would go over the same ground on a fuller scale, it would be very welcome; though his language is so precise and so well considered that we are rarely left in doubt as to the view that he would take. To me

that view seems to be as satisfactory as anything that I could hope for; and it is supplemented by Harnack's book on points where further detail might seem to be needed. These two appreciations of the historical position are before the world, and they furnish what I believe to be an excellent starting-point for future discussion. In the next few months or years we may look for criticism which will help either to establish or to refute them.

But, in the meantime, what more can be done by way of furthering the great object that is in view? It is often expressed in the form that we are called upon to test the validity of Ministries and Sacraments. On that I would ask leave to say a few words.

Nothing is gained by being too squeamish. We must look facts in the face on all sides. At the same time, I must confess that I have a very considerable point of conscience on this question of the validity of Sacraments and Orders. It seems to me to be a very delicate matter, and, indeed, scarcely admissible, for one Christian body to take upon itself to pronounce upon the validity, or otherwise, of the ministrations of another.[1] I think that at least the question ought not to be put in that bald and sweeping form.

If that is done at all, it should not be in the way

[1] [On this subject see also some excellent remarks in *Foundations*, p. 386.]

of general public discussions. It is, perhaps, another thing for the responsible leaders of one communion to examine, as it were, *in camera*, the credentials of another. The calm, severe, technical atmosphere of such an examination is perhaps sufficient safeguard. The formulae in use on such occasions have been handed down from the past, and they can be handled in the way in which technical terms are usually handled by experts.

But it is another thing where appeal is made to a wider public. When the inquiry begins to probe at all deep, it soon ceases to be good for either party to the case. It is injurious to the susceptibilities of the one to have its ultimate credentials canvassed, and perhaps challenged; and, for the party which canvasses and challenges, it is just as bad to lay itself open to the horrible temptations of self-complacency and censoriousness.

And, what is still worse, on the broad general question of the validity of a particular ministry, it seems to me that no human tribunal is really competent to judge. The competence of human judgement is really confined to smaller issues than this. And it seems to me that it would be well if it were rigorously so confined. It may be said to be only a question of wording; but, even if that were true, still I would urge that the one form of words is more defensible than the other, just because of its limitation. As in so many other matters, we cannot avoid some kind of judgement. Each individual

among us is compelled to make up his mind what form of ministry he desires to be under. If he was born in that which has his allegiance, still he must be prepared to justify his continuance in it. This implies something of comparison, and something of examination. Hence, to say that a particular form of ministry has a 'defect', or in wider terms that it is 'defective', may well be a conclusion that cannot be avoided. But this is not to go nearly so far as to call it 'invalid'. We may be sure that every ministry under the sun, at least in its individual members, has its defects and is defective. But it is not therefore invalid. God alone knows what accumulation of defects constitutes invalidity. He can strike the balance of one quality with another as we cannot do. It may well be that the decisive elements in His sight are entirely beyond our ken. That does not absolve us from the responsibility of making up our minds on matters that are within our competence. In regard to these, we must do the best we can.

IV

What further have we to say as to our practical attitude towards competing conceptions of the Christian Ministry? Is there anything more to suggest that may help to ease the situation?

I have expressed my belief that, if we have not

got it already, we are at least not far from obtaining a general view of the course of events in the early centuries that may claim to be sound as history. It will be a great step forwards if in the next ten years that result can be generally agreed upon. A statement has been made with which I think that the Episcopalian bodies at least ought to be content. If they are not, it is incumbent upon them to show cause why they are not. But I do not myself think that substantial exception can be taken to the statement that lies before us—a statement, not from the hands of controversialists, but from the hands of responsible historians. I am not so sure about the non-Episcopalian side. It is possible that there may be criticisms to be made that are not obvious to me. In any case, the turn is with them. It is for them to say what points they would like to have stated differently.

In this respect the issues are being perceptibly narrowed. Over the whole ground of the history, as history, it ought not to be long before a verdict by consent is reached.

But if that is so, what then? How is the confessional question affected? Is there any change in the way in which that ought to be presented? I believe there is; and, if there is, I believe that the tension ought not to be so great.

The point may perhaps be stated thus:

Hitherto Episcopacy has been presented mainly as a dogma; it is a dogma on which one of the

parties has made up its mind, and which it offers, to be taken or left. But what is a dogma? It is a summary proposition, extracted from the data, and expressed barely in the concisest possible form. It expects a direct answer, Aye or No. I suppose that, in the last resort, this sharp and bare antithesis is inevitable. But, at least in the discussion stage, I submit that we should avoid it as much as we can. It is better to think in terms of the concrete than in terms of the abstract. I would say to those who find themselves confronted with a cut-and-dried dogma, Do not consider it in this form, *but clothe it in flesh and blood.* Translate it back into the forms of history; present it to your minds, not as a proposition, but as a picture—a picture embodied in all the richness and fullness of detail that naturally belongs to it, with all the lights and shades of nature, and with all the subtle interweaving of parts and whole.

My belief is that if this attitude were taken up and sustained for some time, the minds of men would be in a better position to approach each other. They would not be repelled by the necessity of saying Aye or No; but room would be given for those unconscious and semi-conscious processes of adjustment and approximation of which the mind is capable when it is left to find its way without hindrance and without dictation.

I should be the more hopeful of such a result, because it seems to me that the Nonconformist

mind especially, in its strong and increasing aspirations after unity, is letting its imagination soar to heights that in the past have hardly been accessible to it.

I have already quoted from the proceedings of the Third International Congregational Council, held at Edinburgh in 1908. Many notable papers were read on that occasion. I was particularly struck by one from the Rev. Oliver Huckel, D.D., of Baltimore, U.S.A. His whole paper is pitched at a high imaginative level, but I would call attention to the following passage :

In the whole spirit and trend of these modern times, I think we may say, if we interpret the Christian tendencies and manifestations aright, there are two very significant possibilities looming before the churches of our Congregational communion in the world to-day.

One possibility is—by our thoughts, practice, and contention to hold a rigid and extreme Evangelical idea, to keep it austere and exclusive, to make it the one type and standard for all Christian thought and life, and in this way to continue to emphasize the differences, and to widen the breach and to keep militant the antagonism in the divided Church of Christ.

The other possibility is—by a larger spirit, a fuller love, and a more comprehensive grasp of truth to enter into a greater Evangelical idea, to make it so full, vital, and comprehensive, in the truest sense Catholic, that it shall make for the essential unity of the spirit among all those differing communions who still call themselves by the name of Christ.

I do believe with all my heart in the Evangelical idea. But I believe most profoundly that it needs a freer spirit, a larger vision, a more spiritual and intellectual comprehensiveness, a deeper and stronger and more inclusive content of meaning than is now prevalent in most of our Protestant churches.

Brethren, the truth itself, I make bold to say, is a larger thing than is contained in either extreme of the Catholic or Evangelical contentions. Nor is it some golden mean. But it is found, I am sure, in a fuller comprehension of the absolute truth that underlies each position. Here is the point of possible reconciliation—in something greater and richer than either the present Catholic or the present Evangelical position. It is heroic, I know, to contend for an Evangelical principle ; it may become more heroic to recognize that the divine life and work in the world may need more than that most valuable principle and to contend for the full inheritance of the saints (*op. cit.*, pp. 199, 200).

Now, I know it may be said that aspirations of this kind are attractive and comparatively easy, so long as they are kept vague and general, but that the rub is felt when the attempt is made to apply them in concrete detail. I would point out, in passing, that in these particular aspirations there are some individual touches that have a value of their own. But I take them as representing, not so much a formula or programme as a frame of mind. And I would venture to suggest that if such a frame of mind became common, not in any one Christian body alone, but in all, the way would be prepared as it cannot easily be by any other means

for that ultimate solution towards which the faces of so many among us are set and their steps are tending. It is in the wide diffusion of what I conceive to be a really right frame of mind that I see the best hope for the future. The presence of it heightens the prospect that, in the field of study, as well as in that of practice—and perhaps in the field of study before it is possible to make any great advance in practice—labours begun apart may converge towards a common end.

THE PROSPECTS OF CHRISTIAN REUNION IN 1912

1909

IV

THE PROSPECTS OF CHRISTIAN REUNION IN 1912

[October, 1912]

It is now rather more than a year since I wrote the first of three articles in the *Contemporary Review* on the Reunion of Christendom—partly on the general question, and partly on a particular aspect of it. It happened that, accidentally but unavoidably, the third article was separated by an interval of some months from the other two, and I was conscious as I wrote it, that in the interval the situation as a whole had undergone a considerable change. I am encouraged to think that it may be worth while to look around us once again and see where we stand at the present time in relation to this great subject.

I

A superficial observer might easily suppose that the Reunion of Christendom was further off than it seemed. At least three forward movements in that direction have been brought to a standstill.

I see it stated in the papers that in Canada proposals for organic union between the Presbyterian

Church of Canada and the Methodist and Congregational Churches have been abandoned for the present. In my own communion I understand that a similar fate has overtaken the negotiations which had been going on between the Presbyterian Church of Australia and the Anglican Union and other Churches.[1] While—more significant than either of these repulses—I am told that the striking demonstration in America which led to the appointment of a Commission for promoting a world-wide Congress on Faith and Order[2] is not likely to be hurried; the Commission appears to be proceeding with commendable caution.

In the spring of last year these movements rather filled the stage, and they have now retired into the background. Does that mean any real and serious set-back to the cause of Reunion?

I do not think it does. So far as the Anglican Communion was involved, I cannot say that I was ever sanguine. I had a strong feeling that the time was not yet ripe for any such far-reaching proposals. And, if that is so, they are better in a state of quiescence. It will be observed that both the Anglican movements took place at a distance from the centre. For, after all, in these matters—for the present, at least—England is still 'the predominant partner'. It is here that the differences which now divide us took their rise; it is here that they strike

[1] [See pp. 27 ff.]
[2] [See pp. 37 ff.]

their roots most deeply into the past; it is here that there are accumulated the greatest stores of experience and knowledge for dealing with them. And in proportion as religious opinion in this country is tenacious, it is also slowly moving. The difficulties to be overcome are enormous; they are certainly not to be put aside by the wave of any magician's wand. Hence, to one who sits quietly in his chair at home and is not carried away by the enthusiasm and applause at public meetings, the proportions of things are apt to seem different; the hidden forces count for more than those which appear upon the surface; the dark background looms more ominously, and the patches of light that play across the front of the landscape are seen to be more fugitive.

For these reasons I think that we may take very calmly such temporary rebuffs as the cause of Reunion may seem to have sustained. They affect, it is true, the party of action; but it is evident that in the Home Church at least the party of action is very much in the minority. There is almost, I might say, a general understanding that the time for action is still a long way off; much water will have to run under the bridges before it is reached. If it was not clear a year ago, I think it must be clear, or becoming clear now, that a great deal of what is called 'spade work' will have to be done before any great overt advance is made. We shall have to dig deep, and dig about the foundations, for a long time

still to come, before we can begin to think about any great reconstruction.

II

But in the meantime, if we look at Christendom as a whole, one really substantial and important step has been taken which may go some way to console even the party of action. No one doubts that Reunion, when it comes, will come piecemeal. The extent of ground to be covered is so vast that only small and isolated portions of it can be worked over at any one time. Particular churches, and particular groups of churches, will have to compose their differences before there can be any question of bringing together the great outstanding communions. The Reformation initiated a period not only of division but of subdivision, and the first step on the road to Reunion will doubtless be the closing up of these subdivisions.

From this point of view, the chief centre of interest once more reverts to Edinburgh.[1] As I look back, I am still impressed as much as I was a year ago, and even more, with the great importance of the Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910. The Conference partly generated and partly brought to a head a state of feeling that was eminently favourable to Reunion.

[1] [See pp. 14 ff. sup.]

The American demonstration of which I have spoken was a direct outcome of this; but its indirect effects have been felt more widely still. These have naturally been somewhat vague and intangible; it would be wrong to connect too exclusively what has just happened at Edinburgh in 1912 with what happened there in 1910. The events of 1912 have certainly had direct and continuous antecedents of their own; for the main line of causation and connexion there is no need to look outside these; but at the same time it is probable enough that the Conference of 1910 was a contributory cause to a greater extent than may have been consciously realized at the moment.

The conspicuous phenomenon has been the strength and energizing force of the desire for unity, not only as exhibited in individuals, but even more as expressing itself in corporate feeling and corporate action. The evident fact was that the desire for unity was 'in the air'; the whole atmosphere was deeply impregnated with it. And one of the causes that contributed to this was, I must needs think, the lingering influence of 1910. Indeed, I believe that influence will be long before it leaves its own classic ground. We might, I dare say, if we liked, put it the other way, and say that the negotiations which had been going on between the Established Church and the United Free Church[1] were among the contributory causes which prepared for the

[1] [See p. 14 sup., and also p. 6.]

Conference of 1910 and made it such a great success. But the outside world will naturally think of 1910 first, and of 1912 second.

The course of events seems to have been something of this kind. For a full generation there had been a desire, which proved to be a growing desire, on the part of the Established Church, to come to terms with its neighbour. In 1907 this desire received authoritative and public expression, which was duly reciprocated by the United Free Church. In 1909 the two bodies appointed committees with instructions to confer together; and the conferences thus begun were continued in a conciliatory spirit. The initiative seems mainly to have come from the side of the Establishment, but the advances were not less cordially received. Last year proceedings had gone so far that the Established Committee took upon itself to sketch in outline the kind of procedure which it thought might be taken. The other side acknowledged the value of this sketch, but excused itself from discussing it on the ground that it did not enter sufficiently into detail. Each committee reported year by year what had been done, and year by year was reappointed by its own Assembly, with instructions to proceed. The instructions were purposely kept vague, but the Established Committee, encouraged by the reply made to it, boldly formulated its proposals, and submitted them in the form of a Memorandum at the beginning of April; and that was the position in which

matters stood when the two Assemblies met at the end of May of the present year. At last the issues had been brought definitely to a head, and the time had come for the crucial decision to be taken. Were the Churches to go forward, or were they to go back? In the one case unanimously, in the other by an overwhelming majority, they decided to go forward.

From a formal point of view, this decision stands for very little. Neither Church is pledged to anything; neither Committee even is pledged to anything; the discussion of details has not yet begun. The only tangible result is that there is now a basis for negotiations. And yet I imagine that most people will feel that the decision is really crucial. The Rubicon was a small river, and its passage was uncontested; yet the crossing of the Rubicon meant the difference between peace and war. The crossing of the Scottish Rubicon means peace—not now, but some day. The day may be distant; there may be not a little contending, and stiff contending, before it is reached. But sooner or later—it may be later rather than sooner—the end desired is bound to come.

All honour to the men to whose patience and statesmanship it is due that things have been brought so far as they have. I am not in the least behind the scenes; I cannot claim any familiarity with the recent history of the Scottish Churches. But I gather from the papers that the mover of the

motion to proceed in the Assembly of the Church of Scotland, who has also been Chairman of the Committee and who made the most impressive speech in introducing his motion, was Lord Balfour of Burleigh; the seconder was Dr. Wallace Williamson, of St. Giles's, Edinburgh; and special reference was made to the Procurator of the Church (Sheriff C. N. Johnston), who appears to have taken a leading part in drafting the Memorandum. The mover of the 'deliverance' in the Assembly of the United Free Church, who had also acted as Chairman of the Committee of that Church, was Dr. John Young; and the seconder was Sir Andrew H. L. Fraser, until recently Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. The introductory speeches in both houses reached a high level of earnestness and statesmanship, and impressed a tone upon the debates, the effect of which is not likely soon to die out.

III

It may seem strange to put by the side of the positive action of the two Scottish Churches the Bill for the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Church in Wales. It may seem that, by comparison, the introduction of this Bill could only be described as something negative, an act of hostility directed against a particular Church, or branch of a Church,

which could only leave increased estrangement and bitterness behind it, and the effect of which would have to be lived down. At first sight, certainly, this does not look like a step on the road to the Reunion of Christendom; and it is, of course, true that it was not intended as such a step, and its immediate and superficial effects are not likely to be conciliating and uniting. Still, I shall venture upon the paradox of expressing my belief that the historian twenty years or less from the present time, as he looks back over the course of events, will see in the story of the movement for the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Church in Wales a landmark also in the other movement towards the Reunion of Churches.

The reason which induces me to take this more hopeful view is because of the light which the history of the movement has thrown upon a change of feeling that is coming over English Nonconformists.

No doubt the Bill, as it stands, is of the nature of an attack upon the Church in Wales. It was introduced in pursuance of the traditional Liberal and Nonconformist policy which is opposed to the existence of State Churches in any form. The moral force behind the Bill has been, and is, derived from the strength of this opposition. Welsh Nonconformists in particular have shown themselves keen supporters of disestablishment and disendowment. They have not failed to do so on this occasion. The Welsh have the gift of speech; and there has been

no lack of strong and uncompromising speech in support of the Bill. And yet, though the speech has been strong, there has been perceptibly less of bitterness behind it. The controversy as a whole has been conducted on both sides with much less bitterness than in times past. A Churchman cannot help pointing with pride to the admirable example that has been set by the leaders on his side of the question, notably by the Welsh Bishops, with the Bishop of St. David's at their head. But, on the other side, too, there has been less of animus and of violence than we have been accustomed to see. And, if I am not mistaken in my impression—as I may be, because I cannot profess to have followed the details of the struggle at all closely—the tone of the controversy has actually tended to become milder as it has proceeded. Something of this should be set down to the special credit of the Prime Minister, who has not only been conspicuously moderate and restrained in language, but has also shown a real desire to temper as far as possible the blow that he was dealing.

Even more remarkable than this has been the evident uneasiness on the part of a number of individual Nonconformists, both in England and in Wales, at the thought of taking away endowments that were being spent, and—they could not help seeing—well and conscientiously spent, in the cause of religion. Although they started with an inherited dislike of the use of endowments in this way, they

liked still less the idea of handing over to secularism and secularists that which was being devoted to the service of religion. To a looker-on it seems as if this feeling was increasing in force, and the *ultimate* fate of the Bill is becoming more and more uncertain.

The utter disinterestedness of this attitude on the part of many Nonconformists is very striking. Of course it is true that they are a minority, and perhaps numerically a not very large minority, of the Nonconformist body as a whole. But this is a case where every individual counts, and counts for a great deal; and the wonder is that there should be so many as there are.

Lord Balfour said, addressing the Moderator: 'Sir, I think the spiritual temperature of Scotland is rising.' Is it not true that the spiritual temperature of the whole United Kingdom is rising? I would fain believe that it is, and that the signs of it are to be seen all around us.

IV

It would be difficult to over-estimate the importance of these two things, the Scottish Movement on the one hand and the indications of a change of temper in British Nonconformity on the other. Taken together, they hold out a promise that was

not apparent on the horizon when I began these articles.

I do not doubt that the procedure of the two Scottish Churches will serve as a model for any future negotiations of the kind. That alone will be a gain, and will make the way of mutual approach easier.

It may indeed be said, by way of discounting the importance of this precedent, that there are no two Churches on the face of the earth that are so near each other to begin with as these two; they are alike in their views of Church order and government, alike in their standards of doctrine, alike in nationality and (to a large extent) in the habits and modes of thought of their adherents.

Full allowance must be made for this. There is but one really considerable difference between the Churches standing in the way of union. That difference is the conception of the relation between Church and State. But that single difference is at once fundamental and typical. It is fundamental, inasmuch as it raises a question of principle; the difference between an established and a non-established Church has in the past proved a serious obstacle. And it is typical, inasmuch as this one case of the Scottish Churches will cover every case where the like question can be raised. To us especially in the Church of England this is important, because we, too, are an Established Church in the midst of others that are not established. In

our dealings with our own fellow members of the same communion in America that is, I know, felt to be a drawback, and perhaps a greater drawback than might antecedently have been supposed.

The Memorandum put forward by the Committee of the Church of Scotland certainly minimizes the significance of the State connexion. And that is quite in accordance with present tendencies in our own Church. A vast majority in the Church of England is little inclined to lay stress on the privileges attached to its connexion with the State, but very keen to assert its independence and to resist any form of State interference. From this point of view the Scottish precedent may well be useful.

If that is so, a yet greater advantage may be derived from the way in which our neighbours deal with the question of endowments. It is true that that question is not as yet directly raised. The Established Committee has only laid down that in no case will the Church consent to have its endowments secularized. If that position alone were gained, it would be a clear step in advance. And I should hope that, with the help of the many Nonconformists who are beginning to have conscientious scruples on this head, there was a good prospect of an agreement being reached on this subject. It is, of course, to be expected that the treatment of endowments will give rise to long and serious discussions in Scotland, as well as in England and in Wales. There are clearly members of

the United Free Church who are sensitive as to any admission of endowment as a principle. But, on the other hand, it is to be noted that the leaders of both Churches are sanguine on this head. The seconder of the motion before the General Assembly of the Established Church spoke distinctly in this sense: and the mover in the other Assembly said twice over that if the general question were settled the question of 'teinds' (tithes) would settle itself. Those who are outside need not trouble themselves with speculations as to what exactly was in his mind: they may be content to wait and see what the combined wisdom of the two Committees recommends. The greatest advantage which the Scottish negotiations possess over the Welsh Bill, and (as well as I can remember) over all previous public proposals on the subject of Establishment, is that the solution which they propose is constructive, whereas all others have been simply destructive. I feel sure that there are many members of Established Churches who will be willing enough to entertain proposals of this kind. It is the process of levelling down that is distasteful to them, the proposal to take away from the service of God property and buildings and rights and duties that have hitherto been dedicated to that service. If, apart from this, anything can be done to equalize the standing and opportunities of the different religious bodies, there are many who would welcome the change.

V

It may seem a somewhat steep descent to come down from these large public movements and considerations of high policy to an unobtrusive event, or projected event, in the world of literature. And yet I do not think that the descent is by any means so great as it seems. This whole series of articles has been inspired by the belief that action is in the long run subordinate to thought. Measures that are taken without being thought out, both in their principles and in their consequences, are sure to be undone and to need doing over again. I said at the outset of this article that what is most wanted at the present time is 'spade-work', preparation of the soil to receive the good seed: until the soil is well dug, however thickly the seed may be scattered, it will not sprout and grow.

We may express the same thing by another metaphor which is perhaps more appropriate to literary work. The first thing to be done—all over the world—is *to create an atmosphere.* When an atmosphere has been created that is really favourable to Reunion, Reunion will come—but not a day sooner. That, I believe, is a conviction that we must get well into our minds if we are to labour to any profit. It is this thought which leads me to ascribe to the literary proposal of which I speak a degree of importance that may not seem to belong

to it. It is as yet only a proposal, but one that is in a fair way to be carried into effect. The intention is to start a new Quarterly, to be called *The Constructive Quarterly*, and I believe that the first number will in all probability appear about Easter, 1913. I do not think that I shall be unduly revealing secrets—for there is, indeed, nothing secret about it—if I add that it is to bear the very comprehensive sub-title 'A Journal of the Faith and Work and Thought of Christendom'. This ecumenical title is to correspond to ecumenical contents. The idea is, on the nearer plane, to bring together writers of all Churches and all schools on the one common ground of a Christianity which claims to be constructive. In this way it is hoped, on the further plane, to work towards—only to work towards, but really to work towards—the more distant goal of Reunion. The initiative comes from America. The editor, who is also 'the author and only begetter' of the whole project, is Mr. Silas McBee, who has been well known for many years as editor of the New York *Churchman*, and whose name is associated with many good causes. In connexion with one of these causes, the Student Volunteer Movement, he recently made a journey to Russia and the East—Egypt, Palestine, and Constantinople—an account of which has been published in a book called *An Eirenic Itinerary*. I doubt very much whether there is any one living who has such intimate relations with so many leading men of so many different creeds,

including the Church of Rome and the Orthodox Churches of the East. No one else could have brought together and united in a common task so many eminent writers of such varied antecedents. I may take upon myself to say that this first condition of success in such a task is already assured. For my own part I must confess to being very hopeful of the result—i.e. of tangible good results—from this new adventure. Perhaps I am not less hopeful because I had to be converted to it. The prospect in itself of adding one to the number of existing Reviews did not seem to me promising: but this particular Review, with its unique aim and unique range of contributions already secured, seems to me to hold out possibilities that are not to be found elsewhere. And the very modesty of the aim—nothing more than the simple juxtaposition of the thoughts of different minds, differently trained, with different surroundings and with little in common beyond the one dominant aspiration—seems to me to exempt this scheme from many of the difficulties and drawbacks that would attach to almost any other.

VI

From one literary item I pass to another. The two intermediate articles in this series were taken up with a sketch of what seemed to me to be the

present position of research in regard to the constitution of the Primitive Church as the basis of all our modern theories.

I threw out this sketch tentatively, as perhaps combining the features in regard to which students of all schools would be most agreed. At the same time I invited questions and criticism, as the best way to test the foundations of the structure on which any of us might propose to build.

It was not at all in response to this invitation, but quite independently, that my last article had only just appeared when a question was raised which really goes to the root of the whole matter. In the *Journal of Theological Studies* for April, 1912, the Dean of Wells—whom we still cannot help thinking of by his old title as Dean of Westminster—Dr. Armitage Robinson, had an article on 'The Problem of the *Didache*' which might be called iconoclastic, if the *icon* were an '*idolon* of the cave', such as is apt to obtain currency for want of sufficient testing.

It is quite true, as the Dean thinks, that the question is one of primary importance. If the Dean's view of the *Didache* holds good, many other opinions will have to be revised—including all that I have ever myself written, or even thought, on the constitution of the Primitive Church. For I must confess that from the first moment of the discovery of the *Didache* I have continued to think of it as the real key to the situation: it has seemed to me exactly

what was wanted to bring all the other facts together, and to give them cohesion and unity.

It will be seen at once that this opinion is at the opposite pole from the Dean's. But indeed his article is extremely modest and tentative. He only asks to have the question of the *Didache* reopened; and that of course he has, simply for the asking. Yet I doubt whether so far the common view, which dates from Harnack's first discussion of the subject in 1884, is even shaken.

What the Dean has really given us is a very close and delicate examination of the use of the New Testament in the *Didache*. In this respect his article is quite a model in its kind, and I for one should accept it as practically final. In every single instance—whether in regard to the Acts, or the Pauline Epistles, or the Fourth Gospel and First Epistle of St. John—I believe that he has proved his point; and he has added considerably to the list of allusions hitherto acknowledged.

But, beyond this, what has he done? He has thrown out hints—they are in any case not more—which I am afraid that I do not quite understand, and am still less able to follow.

For instance, the Dean writes to this effect about the history of the book:

> The result of these and other investigations has been to show that the *Two Ways*, either as a Jewish or as a Christian manual, had a considerable vogue in early times; but that the *Teaching of the Twelve*

Apostles has left comparatively few traces of its circulation—hardly any, indeed, which are of value for determining its date. Much light has been thrown on the antecedents of the first part of the book; but the second part, which deals with Church order, is still an unsolved riddle. It does not seem to fit in anywhere, in either time or place. The community which it presupposes is out of relation to all our knowledge of Church history. It is as much an isolated phenomenon after all our researches as when it surprised us at its first appearance.

I fear that I cannot recognize this as an adequate —and, if any one else had been writing, I might have said even as an accurate—statement. Two facts stand out conspicuously in the history of the *Didache*. One is, that its claims were seriously considered by the Early Church for a place in Holy Scripture. Eusebius rejects the claim, while Athanasius accepts the book by name as at least 'profitable for instruction' along with the Old Testament Apocrypha. And these discussions make it probable that Clement of Alexandria had in view the whole *Didache* when he quotes as Scripture a saying from the *Two Ways*. The other fact is, that the *Didache* is incorporated almost bodily in the *Apostolic Constitutions* towards the end of the fourth century. There are other backward links of connexion of a slighter kind. In the face of these facts it does not seem to me possible to speak of anything like 'isolation'. Indeed, the evidence is quite as much as we can expect in proportion to the amount of extant literature earlier than the Council of Nicaea.

I myself believe the *Didache* to be older than the Epistle of Barnabas. This would place it somewhere about the last two decades of the first century, into which (so far as I can form an opinion) it seems to fit exactly. It comes in just at the moment of transition and rapid development which followed upon the end of the Apostolic Age. New Testament functionaries, like the 'prophets' and 'apostles' (in the wider sense), are still actively in evidence, while the 'bishops' are not yet differentiated from 'presbyters'. For locality, I should be content to place it in some rather out of the way Christian community of Syria or Palestine, perhaps beyond the Jordan.

Another point which I fail to grasp is the inference which the Dean would have drawn from the writer's use of Scripture. Why does he so often call that use 'perverse'? No doubt the writer had certain books vividly present to his mind, and adapted phrases from them to his purpose. But what is there peculiar or suspicious in that?

It would be to me much more strange if the book were really, as the Dean seems to think, a sort of literary mystification. I have not much belief in such mystifications at this early period and under these primitive conditions. Where the Dean sees recondite motive, I am inclined to see only a certain naïve simplicity. It may not be quite easy for us to enter into this; but that does not to my mind suffice to discredit the book as a witness to facts.

For these reasons I cannot anticipate any great change in the estimate of the book that has hitherto prevailed. At the same time I am not sorry that the question has been raised. The more significant a witness is, the more important is it that he should be cross-examined and his evidence tested even with some severity.

EPILOGUE

As this little book is leaving my hands there are two more events which deserve to be chronicled.

One carries a decided step further the proposed Conference on Faith and Order.[1] It is a public announcement by the two English Primates of the support which the Church of England is prepared to give to the movement. As yet neither the date nor the place of the Conference are fixed; but it is agreed that, as the initiative has hitherto come from America, it should remain there, and that the invitations should be issued by the American branches of the different bodies taking part in it. Along with this would go 'the possibility or probability that the ultimate conference when held would be on American soil'. In the meantime a Committee of twenty has been nominated by the Archbishops who 'should watch the progress of the arrangements for the proposed conference, organize support

[1] [See pp. 37 ff., 116.]

and help in England for these endeavours, and specially stimulate general interest and regular and widespread prayer in the matter'.

If I may be allowed to say so, these steps appear to me to be eminently wise, and the composition of the Committee is highly satisfactory.

The other event is once more literary. At the end of November there was published by Messrs. Macmillan a book called *Foundations: A Statement of Christian Belief in Terms of Modern Thought*, by seven of the younger generation of Oxford Fellows and Tutors. The importance of the book thus lies in a certain representative character which it possesses as expressing the views of the younger men at a typical intellectual centre. I may also add that, if I am not mistaken, it fully deserves the attention which it has received for the intrinsic value of its contents.

The book is marked by great sincerity in both directions: it is at once thoroughly modern and genuinely conservative in its effort to maintain full continuity with the past. And it is particularly noticeable that, on questions of more acute controversy, its method is predominantly synthetic; it does not so much deny or reject either side in the debate as aim at combining what is best in both in a higher synthesis.

This is in particular the method followed in dealing with the question of Reunion. The treatment of this subject has fallen to the Rev. A. E. J.

Rawlinson, Tutor of Keble. He takes it up in connexion with the general question of 'Authority' in the Church. He follows very much the same lines as these papers in dealing, first, with 'Authority and Church Order', and then with 'Authority and Reunion'; there is also an appendix on 'The Historical Origins of the Christian Ministry'. The discussion of what may be called the Protestant principle starts from an essay of Dr. Bartlet's in a recent volume, *Evangelical Christianity: its History and Witness*, edited by Dr. W. B. Selbie, Principal of Mansfield College. The essay deserves this prominence by its earnest religious grasp of the principle which it expounds. At the same time I must needs think it somewhat one-sided in its selection of facts and too confined in its interpretation of history. Mr. Rawlinson seeks to redress the balance, and in my opinion does so successfully. I hardly think that he does justice to the position of the 'presbyters', who are quite as primitive as the 'bishops' and were as naturally and necessarily taken over from the constitution of the Jewish synagogue. In regard to Apostolical Succession, I believe that both writers may find something to learn from the passage of Harnack's quoted above (pp. 77 ff.). But, as a whole, the discussion is a distinct advance on the road to agreement by general consent, which I cannot think is far off. After all, the Conference on Faith and Order will have a good deal of collected and digested matter before it on which to base its deliberations.

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